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The symbolic value of the ship in the work of herman melville

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THE SYMBOLIC VALUE OF THE SHIP IN THE WORK OF HERMAN MELVILLE

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ABSTRACT

In 1850, Melville adapted the shopworn symbol of the ship to his use in White Jacket. He found his horizontal fore-aft symbolism extant within naval tradition and utilized it to convey his political and sociological philosophy. The quarter-deck of the Neversink symbolizes the aristocacy while the forecastle symbolizes the common man or the people. However, Melville was forced to create his own vertical aloft-below symbolism in order to explore and reveal psychology. Aloft symbolizes man in his natural state while below symbolizes man in an unnatural state. Melville also utilizes symbolism of parts of the ship and of the ship herself, and in so doing, men become physical microcosms of their ship and the ship becomes a microcosm of the world.

In 1851, Melville reworked the symbol of the ship in Moby-Dick. He resorted again to fore-aft symbolism. However, the quarter-deck of the Pequod symbolizes a pseudo-king in his unnatural state while the forecastle symbolizes common man in his natural state or the kingly-commons. And Melville returns once more to aloft-below symbolism. But aloft now symbolizes man's modern philosophical conscious while below symbolizes man's primeval psychological subconscious. Melville again utilizes symbolism of parts of the ship and of the ship herself, as the ship becomes a macrocosm of intellectual man and the world becomes a macrocosm of the ship.

Through repeated analogy between the Pequod and Ahab, the Pequod comes to symbolize Ahab. As a symbol of Ahab, the Pequod reflects his philosophical view of life and reveals his psychological state of mind. Fore-aft symbolism reveals Ahab's alienation from mankind while aloft-below symbolism reveals his rebellion against authority. And symbolism of parts of the ship and of the ship herself reflect Ahab's physical, intellectual, and spiritual fate.

CHAPTER I

The Neversink

Melville's use of the ship as symbol was not original. If he had chosen to chronicle the ship in art and literature as he did the whale, he could, no doubt, have compiled an equally impressive catalogue. The early Christian writers often dilated on the symbol of the ship and were entombed in catacombs where lamps in the form of a sailing ship revealed the same motif on the walls. The saints have often been depicted with ship in association with death and the soul. In the sixteenth-and-seventeenth-century emblem books, the ship was a familiar representation of the soul and its destiny.[1] And the ship was also used in Christian symbolism as an emblem of the early Christian Church riding out the storms of persecution. The mast and yardarms have often been used to signify the Cross, under a dove or the sacred monogram.

The ship is used in much the same manner as a symbol of state, steered by her statesmen through the shoals of internal deceit and the storms of foreign war. In 1849 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote The Building of the Ship with its immortal, "Sail on, O Ship of State! / Sail on, O Union strong and great!" Unfortunately, as a work of art, she foundered and sank, but the following year in White Jacket, Melville attempted to salvage her.

However, Melville either lacked the power and skill as yet to float a vessel both seaworthy and symbolic at once, or he merely failed to exert them. Nevertheless, White Jacket is the place to begin a study of Melville's symbolic use of the ship. To fully understand Melville's use of the ship as symbol, one must begin with White Jacket, touch upon Billy Budd, and culminate in Moby-Dick. Melville's symbolic use of the ship was organic, constantly undergoing change and growth. It changed as Melville's purposes changed, and it grew as Melville grew as an artist. The homeward-bound cruise of the Neversink in White Jacket was the shakedown cruise which prepared Melville for the outward-bound cruise of the Pequod in Moby-Dick.

Melville states his self-avowed goal for the Neversink in the "Preface" to White Jacket: "The object of this work is to give some idea of the interior life in a man-of-war."[2] However, Melville reveals his other self-evident goals for the Neversink throughout the text of White Jacket. L. R. Thompson states this case well in Melville's Quarrel with God, although his interpretation of the allegorical element of White Jacket remains a moot question: "Melville had the talent for telling what life was like, aboard a man-of-war; but his 'genius' probably impelled him to do two other things, simultaneously: with a prophetlike missionary zeal, he translated his narrative into a denunciatory propaganda tract in order to attach the brutal tyranny of the naval officers toward the enlisted men, and particularly to attack

the cruel practice of flogging; but, covertly, he endowed both narrative and propaganda with allegorical connotations to illuminate his own personal and private religious reaction against his Calvinistic heritage."[3]

Owing to Melville's dual role as seaman-author, his physical presentation of the Neversink is skillful, authentic, and apparently accurate. And because of Melville's obsession with facts and description, it must be very near to, if not exhaustively, complete. However, observing Melville manipulate this factual description offsets possible boredom, as Melville the seaman describes his vessel, Melville the crusader slants the description into propaganda, and Melville the artist attempts to transmute base propaganda into pure allegory.

In the process of creating this documentary-propaganda tract-allegory, Melville acquired immeasurable craft in handling a ship not only as a physical vessel for men and machinery, but also as a literary vessel for feelings and concepts. And most important, by the conclusion of White Jacket, Melville seems to perceive his potential for creating a ship which is at once a physical and transcendental vessel.

Melville's use of symbolic areas within the frigate Neversink may be classified by two methods--(1) vertical aloft-below symbolism and (2) horizontal fore-aft symbolism. Although Melville was forced to create his own aloft-below symbolism, he found his fore-aft symbolism extant within naval tradition.

By ancient tradition, the forward area of a ship is associated with the crew or common seamen because their quarters were originally located in the forecastle. Conversely, the after area is traditionally associated with the captain and officers because they gave their orders from the quarter-deck or poop deck, and their cabins were located directly beneath.

The poop deck had its medieval origin in the aefter-castel battlement from which archers "plied a sturdy bow." By the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the aefter-castel had evolved into an elaborately sheered housing which greatly exceeded the forecastle in height.[4] This towering castle-like structure created a mystique which endured and flourished through the following centuries even though the poop itself actually diminished in size. By the 1800's, some frigates even had flush weather-decks.[5] In spite of this physical leveling, the poop and quarter-deck continued "holding the same air or reverence which appears to have its source in obscure antiquity."[6]

White Jacket reflects this awe when he marvels of the captain, "When he stands on his quarter-deck at sea, he absolutely commands as far as the eye can reach" (Ch. VI, p.35). White Jacket realizes, at least unconsciously, that the spell emanates more from the quarter-deck than from the man. At a diplomatic gathering ashore, White Jacket observes that even the commodore "did not appear so exalted as when leaning, in solitary state, against the brass railing of the Neversink's

quarter-deck" (Ch. LXIX, p. 277). And on another occasion, White Jacket muses that there is a "great difference between the stately absolutism of a commodore enthroned on his poop in a foreign harbour, and an unlaced commodore negligently reclining in an easy-chair in the bosom of his family at home" (Ch. LXVIII, p. 273).

Perhaps the mystique of the medieval aefter-castel explains the transformation of captain into king, cabin into throne room, quarter-deck into castle, and ship into kingdom: "Captain Claret was... as kingly in his cabin as Harry on his throne. For the ship is a bit of terra-firma cut from the main; it is a state in itself; and the captain is its king" (Ch. VI, p.35). Certainly the mystique of the aefter-castel, coupled with this transformation, provides the stepping stone from documentary to allegory: "It is no limited monarchy, where the sturdy Commons have a right to petition, and snarl if they please; but almost a despotism, like the Grand Turk's. The captain's word is law; he never speaks but in the imperative mood. When he stands on his quarter-deck at sea, he absolutely commands as far as the eye can reach. Only the moon and stars are beyond his jurisdiction. He is lord and master of the sun" (Ch. VI, p.35).

The disastrous potential of this mystique lending itself to despotism is clearly revealed by an incident related by White Jacket: Captain Claret orders "hard up the helm" in the face of a formidible storm, choosing to scud before the blow to almost certain destruction,

rather than to turn to battle the storm; however, Mad Jack orders "hard down" countermanding Captain Claret's order, electing to run into the blow to battle the storm, and thereby, saving the ship (Ch. XXVI, p. 111/ Ch. XXVII, p. 115). This incident clearly illustrates the stupidity and danger inherent when the de facto leader and the natural leader are not one and the same. As the incompetence of the naval hierarchy is exposed by the documentary, the weakness of the hereditary monarchy is revealed in the allegory.

If Captain Claret is king, then his lieutenants and other officers are his lords and noblemen. White Jacket specifically refers to the lieutenants as "quarter-deck lords" (Ch. VIII, p. 42) and "barons of the gun-room" (Ch. XII, p. 59). (The gun room or ward room resembles "a long, wide corridor in a large hotel," according to White Jacket, with "numerous doors opening on both hands to the private apartments of the officers" (Ch. VI, p.36). The ward-room officers utilize this area as a mess hall and sitting room.) Since the captain's cabin is transfigured into a throne room, it is inevitable that White Jacket will extend the metaphor and refer to the gun room as the "House of Peers" (Ch. VIII, p. 42).

Within this unlimited monarchy, the sturdy commons with no right to petition is, of course, the common seaman. By the "nomenclature of the quarter-deck," the common seamen are designated as "the people" (Ch. VII, p. 40). Chapter titles playfully carry out the theme:

for example, "One of 'The People' has an Audience with the Commodore and the Captain on the Quarter-deck" (Chapter LI) and "'The People' are given 'Liberty'" (Chapter LIV). However, when White Jacket charges that the ward room and the "aristocratic awning of our quarter-deck" protect the defrauders of the people (Ch. XLIV, p. 185), the mood is no longer playful, and blatant propaganda threatens to overwhelm allegory as well as documentary.

White Jacket vilifies the quarter-deck through continual unfavorable contrast with the forecastle: the people of the forecastle abhor war while the aristocracy of the quarter-deck welcomes it. "But why this contrast between the forecastle and the quarter-deck, between the man-of-war's man and his officer? Because, though war could equally jeopardise the lives of both, yet, while it held out to the sailor no promise of promotion, and what is called glory, these things fired the breast of his officers" (Ch. XLIX, p. 203).

White Jacket sanctifies the forecastle through continual favorable contrast with the quarter-deck: the after-guard of the quarter-deck are derided as the "least robust, least hardy, and least sailor-like" (Ch. III, p. 22), chosen for their good looks, while the "Old Guard" of the forecastle or sheet-anchor men are eulogized as the "old weather-beaten set, culled from the most experienced" (Ch. III, p. 21).

White Jacket vilifies the quarter-deck and sanctifies the forecastle through continual contrast of individual officers with

individual common seamen, particularly sheet-anchor men. A sophomoric five-foot midshipman of the quarter-deck serves as foil for a venerable six-foot seaman of the forecastle, whom he humiliates over a trivial matter (Ch. LII, p. 212). Captain Claret, deemed a lenient officer, roars, "Lay on! I'll see his backbone!" because Old Ushant, Captain of the Forecastle, refuses to shave his beard (Ch. LXXXVII, pp. 343-347). "A fine specimen of a sea-sexagenarian," Ushant "was ever alert at his duty; intrepidly mounting the fore-yard in a gale, his long beard streaming like Neptune's...a remarkably staid, reserved, silent, and majestic old man...wont to talk philosophy to his ancient companions--the old sheet-anchor men around him" (Ch. LXXXIV, p. 332). And while the commodore occupies himself with such weighty matters as memoranda on the dispensation of pickles to the people (Ch. VI, p. 35) an aged sheet-anchor man kneels in the chains, "his face turned seaward, with closed eyes, buried in prayer" (Ch. LXXVI, p. 307).

White Jacket loses no opportunity to portray the forecastle as the sanctuary of dignified industry, common sense, and humanity, as opposed to the quarter-deck as the seat of officious incompetence, folly, and inhumanity. The polarity of forecastle and quarter-deck represents the polarity of officers and royalty as opposed to common seaman and people.

Melville's horizontal fore-aft symbolism proved barely adequate to convey his two-dimensional political and sociological philosophy.

He realized instinctively that he would need a third dimension in order to delve into psychology. The obvious solution to his problem was a vertical aloft-below symbolism to complement his horizontal fore-aft symbolism. However, the solution itself created another problem, in that Melville would be forced to discover or create this symbolism for himself.

He began with the tops, creating an idyllic dream world which was to symbolize man's natural environment, and he worked down into the hold, revealing a naturalistic nightmare world which was to symbolize man's unnatural environment. Having established his symbols, Melville was then free to illustrate his thesis, that a natural environment produces a natural man, and his antithesis, that an unnatural environment produces an unnatural man.

The tops are an idyl of sunshine, fresh air, and the "blue, boundless, dimpled, laughing, sunny sea." Looking out at the "laughing, sunny sea" from the tops or mastheads above the decks makes the topman mirthful, according to White Jacket, and performing their "lofty" duty makes them noble: "Who were more liberal-hearted, lofty-minded, gayer, more jocund, elastic, adventurous, given to fun and frolic, than the topmen of the fore, main, and mizen masts? The reason of their liberal-heartedness was that they were daily called upon to expatiate themselves all over the rigging; the reason of their lofty-mindedness was that they were high lifted above the petty tumults, carping cares, and paltrinesses of the decks below" (Ch. XII, pp. 57-58).

The tops, located at the heads of the lower masts, symbolize the world aloft: "Now, the tops of a frigate are quite spacious and cosy. They are railed in behind so as to form a kind of balcony, very pleasant of a tropical night. From twenty to thirty loungers may agreeably recline there, cushioning themselves on old sails and jackets. We had rare times in that top....In a large degree we nourished that feeling of esprit de corps, always pervading, more or less, the various sections of a man-of-war's crew. We main-top men were brothers, one and all; and we loaned ourselves to each other with all the freedom in the world" (Ch. IV, p. 27).

In the natural environment of the top, all men are brothers; while on deck even brothers do not act as brothers, as is demonstrated by the set-piece, "A Man-of-War Button Divides Two Brothers" (Chapter LIX). Only when men do not act as brothers is there need of law. "There's no law up aloft here," proclaims a topman (Ch. LVI, p. 228). There is need for neither law nor enforcer, for by Melville's psychological thesis, a natural environment produces a natural man, who needs no artificial laws or authority to function naturally.

Being subject to no law, each topman becomes in effect a king unto himself and his world aloft. Jack Chase, Captain of the Top, addresses his "royal-yard men" with the mock-serious pronouncement that "we all wear crowns, from our cradles to our graves, and though in double-darbies in the brig, the commodore himself can't unking us" (Ch. LVI, p. 229). Literally and figuratively, the topmen are looking

down upon a deck reception given by the naval aristocracy of the Neversink for the civil aristocracy of Brazil. Taken out of context, this vignette would appear to be an inverted microcosm of the world. However, viewed through the context of White Jacket's presentation of a common king, and Melville's development of a kingly-commons, the microcosm rights itself and the macrocosm appears inverted.

Unfortunately, however, the topmen can not remain aloft indefinitely, although White Jacket makes clearly apparent that he should: "White Jacket was where he belonged. It was White Jacket that loosed that main-royal, so far up aloft there, it looks like a white albatross' wing" (Ch. II, p. 20). The necessities of eating, sleeping, and following orders bind them to the decks below; and war, accidents, and disease kill them there. Even White Jacket stationed on the main-royal yard, the loftiest yard of the frigate, is dragged down to the mental debasement of the deck and the physical humiliation of the hold. The world below decks is an unnatural one for the topmen, and the creatures who dwell there reflect their unnatural environment.

The hold is a nightmare of darkness, foul air, and drainage, sewage, and bilge. Attending to the drainage and sewage below hatches on the gun deck makes "those odious ditchers and night scavengers, the ignoble 'Waisters'" as well as the steady-cooks, sweepers, and spitbox musterers of the still lower berth deck into a "narrow-minded set; with contracted souls." "The Holders of our frigate, the Troglodytes, who lived down in the tarry cellars and caves below the birth-deck, were, nearly all of them, men of gloomy dispositions, taking sour views of things" (Ch. XII, p. 58).

The sick bay located at the bow on the berth deck symbolizes the world below: "As with most frigates, the sick-bay of the Neversink was on the berth-deck--the third deck from above. It was in the extreme forward part of that deck, embracing the triangular area in the bows of the ship. It was, therefore, a subterranean vault, into which scarce a ray of heaven's glad light ever penetrated, even at noon." Since stores and ammunition sink the berth deck below water level, the air ports, auger holes in the ship's sides, must be hermetically sealed: "These places for ventilation being shut, the sick-bay is entirely barred against the free, natural admission of fresh air." The sick bay is inhabited by the surgeon's steward: "He was a small, pale, hollow-eyed young man, with that peculiar Lazarus-like expression so often noticed in hospital attendants. Seldom or never did you see him on deck, and when he did emerge into the light of the sun, it was with an abashed look, and an uneasy, winking eye. The sun was not made for him" (Ch. LXXVII, pp. 309-310).

Through contrasting the hermetically sealed air-holes of the hold with the fresh air of the top, and the natural sunlight of the top with the unnatural light of lamps burning within the hold at high noon, Melville could underscore the unnaturalness of life in the hold. The waisters are characterized as "night-scavengers" who are "very seldom to be seen on the spar-deck, but [keep] below out of sight" (Ch. XII, p. 58/Ch. XV, p. 72). The holders, likened to miners as pale as ghosts, "seldom come on deck to sun themselves" (Ch. III, p. 23).

However, on dark nights a holder named Shakings emerges from the forehold (Ch. XLII, p. 172).

These creatures exist in a state in which even such natural functions as eating and sleeping are dictated by artificial law rather than natural law. Because of the unnaturalness of the condition, it must be artificially enforced by a master-of-arms, himself corrupt, prowling the bowels of the ship by night to extinguish unlawful light (Ch. LXVIII, pp. 272-273). There is need for both law and enforcer, for by Melville's psychological antithesis, an unnatural environment produces an unnatural man, who needs artificial laws and authority to function unnaturally.

Being subject to such law, all holders become in effect slaves to their officers and their world below. White Jacket, Topman, informs the public of the heart-rending incident when "the person flogged was a middle-aged man of the waist--a forlorn, broken-down, miserable object, truly....He was flogged at the complaint of a midshipman... though this waister was so ignoble a mortal, yet his being scourged on this one occasion indirectly proceeded from the mere wanton spite and unscrupulousness of the midshipman in question" (Ch. LII, p. 210). Literally and figuratively, the holders are looked down upon by the naval aristocracy of the Neversink as well as the civil aristocracy of Brazil (Ch. LVII, p. 230). Taken in or out of context, this vignette appears to be a microcosm of the world. However, the microcosm below is an inversion of the microcosm aloft.

Melville created an idyllic dream world in the tops, symbolizing man's natural environment, and then he utilized the top to illustrate his thesis that a natural environment produces a natural man. Melville also created a naturalistic nightmare world in the hold, symbolizing man's unnatural environment, and then he utilized the hold to develop his antithesis that an unnatural environment produces an unnatural man. Melville states the synthesis of his thesis and anti-thesis quite clearly, "The Good or Bad Temper of Man-of-war's Men, in a great degree, attributable to their Particular Stations and Duties aboard Ship" (Chapter XII). And as if to confirm his synthesis by psychological experiment, Melville has a "most merry and companionable" topmen promoted to the gun deck where he immediately develops all of the undesirable characteristics of the gunners, who are a "very cross, bitter, ill-natured, inflammable" lot who drive the sailors from them by "cursing and swearing as if all their consciences had been powder-singed and made callous by their calling (Ch. XII, pp. 54-55).

Unfortunately, Melville's tongue-in-cheek psychological symbols and theories tend to obscure the more profound psychological images and insights he was developing. The natural life of the tops epitomizes health and life itself in contrast to the unnatural life of the hold which prefigures sickness and death.

Only an open-work partition divides the sick bay from the remainder of the berth deck (Ch. LXXVII, p. 309). Sleep, which would be

a natural function characterizing good health on the open weather deck, becomes an unnatural act characterized by imagery of sickness, death, and decay on the berth deck three decks below. On a hot night slung in a hammock among five-hundred other hammocks hung eighteen inches from one another "only a skeleton could keep cool." Lowering his hammock in the hope of catching a breeze, White Jacket unconsciously forms the pre-natal position. Rejecting this position, he raises his hammock, only to find "my luckless hammock was stiff and straight as a board; and there I was--laid out in it, with my nose against the ceiling, like a dead man's against the lid of his coffin." White Jacket rejects this position as unnatural also. He is condemned to swing in his eighteen inches ("they give you more swing than that at the gallows") just as is everyone else (Ch. XX, pp. 87-88).

Continuing the imagery of death and decay in connection with the berth deck and sleep is the image of five-hundred wet bodies uniformally packed together in sleep "the way in which they box up subjects intended to illustrate the winter lectures of a professor of surgery" (Ch. XXI, p. 90). Murders are frequently attempted by cutting down a sleeper's hammock over strategically-placed twenty-four-pound cannon shot (Ch. XX, p. 83). And White Jacket details the dead disturbing the sleep of the living as the body of a topman named Shenly is transfered from the sick bay to the gun deck: "It was placed on the death-board (used for that purpose), and we proceeded with it toward the main-

hatchway, awkwardly crawling under the tiers of hammocks, where the entire watch below was sleeping. As, unavoidably, we rocked their pallets, the man-of-war's men would cry out against us; through the mutterings of curses, the corpse reached the hatchway. Here the board slipped, and some time was spent in readjusting the body. At length we deposited it on the gun-deck" (Ch. LXXIX, p. 319).

If Melville the health inspector-propagandist is appalled by the conditions exposed below decks, Melville the psychologist-novelist is attracted by the mysteries to be explored below decks: beneath the berth deck, entered by a "dim, devious corridor," "through low arches in the bulkhead beyond, you peep in upon distant vaults and catacombs, obscurely lighted in the far end" (Ch. XXX, p. 126). "Indeed, there were several parts of the ship under hatches shrouded in mystery, and completely inaccessible to the sailor. Wondrous old doors, barred and bolted in dingy bulkheads, must have opened into regions full of interest to a successful explorer. They looked like the gloomy entrances to family vaults of buried dead...I almost quaked to dive in...and satisfy myself whether these vaults indeed contained the mouldering relics of bygone old commodores and post-captains" (Ch. XXXI, p. 129).

White Jacket and most probably Melville are equally fascinated by the creatures who inhabit these mysterious regions, "marked characters...many of whom moved in mysterious circles beneath the lowermost

deck, and at long intervals flitted into sight like apparitions, and disappeared again" (Ch. XXXI, p. 128). "In time of tempests, when all hands are called to save ship, they issue forth into the gale like the mysterious old men of Paris during the massacre of the Three Days of September; every one marvels who they are, and whence they come; they disappear as mysteriously, and are seen no more until another general commotion" (Ch. III, p. 23).

Perhaps Melville in experimenting with the connection between environment and personality has discovered that he can utilize spacial depth to convey psychological depth. And perhaps his repeated references to the subterranean depths of the hold and its subterranean vaults and to the holders as miners in the Cornwall mines, troglodytes, rabbits burrowing in warrens, and terrapins in caves (Ch. III, p. 23) is his discovery that things buried in the earth make an effective symbol for things buried in the human mind, since both are inaccessible and so unknowable.

Melville's vertical aloft-below symbolism proved inadequate to convey his three-dimensional psychological thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. However, as in his horizontal fore-aft symbolism, his use of the ship appears self-conscious and mechanical.

Melville's use of symbolic objects concerning the frigate Neversink may be divided into two groups--(1) symbolism of parts of the ship and (2) symbolism of the ship herself. On the whole, Melville's

preoccupation with producing propaganda rather than art impairs his symbolic use of the ship. However, occasionally his object symbolism transcends his propaganda.

In developing his king-captain theme to underscore the tyranny of the naval hierarchy, Melville has the commodore, like that "potent... emperor and Caesar...Charles the Fifth," amuse himself by exercising yards and sails, thereby causing Baldy, one of the captains of the mizen top, to fall from the mizen-topsail-yard. Ironically, he is sacrificed upon the quarter-deck horseblock below from which the order to exercise yards and sails was probably given (Ch. XLVI, p. 189-192). However, the irony is implicit because Melville, so lavish elsewhere with interpretation, fails to elucidate upon the significance of the horseblock: it is the instrument by which "the people of the gun-deck suffer, that the commodore on the poop may be glorified" (Ch. XLVI, p. 193), and as such is a symbol of this exploitation.

Melville does not neglect the opportunity to embellish this incident with religious overtones involving the ship. White Jacket, digressing to describe a similar accident, specifies that a topman fell from the main-royal-yard which "forms a cross with the mast," following which White Jacket explicitly compares falling from "that lofty cross in a line-of-battle ship" with falling from "the cross of St. Paul's" (Ch. XLVI, p. 193). The juxtaposition in the following chapter of the mocking auction of a dead seaman's clothing underscores the crucifixion motif (Ch. XLVII, pp. 193-196), as does the "snow-white, solitary

fowl, which--whence coming no one could tell" hovers over the mainmast during Shenly's funeral (Ch. LXXXI, p. 303).

However, Melville makes no attempt to extend the metaphor to compare the three masts of the man-of-war with the three crosses of Calvary. Since Baldy is the captain of the mizenmast rather than the central mainmast and Melville seems unwilling to sacrifice Jack Chase, his mainmast counterpart, perhaps he could not. And since Baldy's name is Baldy, it is perhaps well that he could not. Melville is either too possessed by the power of reminiscence to depart from the nicknames and events of his own brief naval career, or he instinctively realizes that such comparison would be incongruous, if not sacrilegious within the context of his propaganda tract.

More apropos and caustically ironic is the death-board which rests upon two gun-carriages upon the half-deck, ever awaiting the fruits of war, the commodore's amusement, and the experimentation of the ship's surgeon. It is covered with an old royal-stun'-sail, prefiguring Melville's ability of Moby-Dick to select an object and develop it symbolically or allegorically, while preserving its original practical identity. Melville chose this particular sail for practical reasons because it is the right size. He chose the royal-stun'-sail for artistic reasons because it associates the common seaman with royalty by its very name and by the loftiness and grandeur of its position as the highest sail rigged upon ship. (The sky sail was occasionally rigged higher, but "sky sail" would not bear the same connotative

power as "royal-stun'-sail.")

The irony of this particular sail being used as a drop cloth to protect the death board conjures up the greater and more bitter irony of the death board awaiting the noble men who man the royal-stun'-sails and bear their name. Not only does the royal-stun'-sail associate White Jacket, who was stationed on the main-royal-yard, the loftiest yard of the frigate, with the death board, but it prefigures Baldy's fall, which evokes the memory of White Jacket's English counterpart's death fall from the main-royal-yard, which prefigures White Jacket's own fall (Ch. XCII, p. 369-371). The very loftiness which exhilarates White Jacket's mind constantly threatens to extinguish it.

The royal-stun'-sail is associated with speed as well as with loftiness. Ships rigged with stun' or studding sails are said to be "crowding all sail." Since the stun' sail became something of a symbol of the homeward bounder, or of the Neversink itself, being a homeward bounder. Seamen also used the term as a euphemism for a dead or dying seaman such as the topman Shenly. Fittingly, the sail-makers of the Neversink act as undertakers, sewing a shroud of sail cloth for the topman. As they discuss the corpse and death in nautical terms, it becomes increasingly evident that Shenly as a homeward bounder is merely a microcosm of the Neversink as a homeward bounder. And in the final chapter, Melville clearly depicts the Neversink as an allegorical homeward bounder which is a microcosm of the world.

The sailmaker-undertaker Thrummings observes to his old crony Ringrope, "He's further aloft now, I hope, than ever he was at the fore-truck....I tell ye, now, ten best-bower anchors wouldn't sink this 'ere topman" (Ch. LXXX, p. 320). Thrummings figuratively likens Shenly's soul to an unsinkable ship, possibly playing upon the name of the Neversink, while Ringrope figuratively likens Shenly's body to a sinking hull. So the sailmaker-undertaker Ringrope disagrees with Thrummings, "His hull here will soon be going out of sight below hatches" (Ch. LXXX, p. 320). Ringrope thereby echoes White Jacket's analogy as Shenly lay dying, "It was the mere foundering hull of a man that was before me" and dead, "Poor Shenly! thought I...here you lie becalmed, in the last calm of all!" (Ch. LXXIX, pp. 318-319). Jack Chase utilizes the same body-hull analogy in describing a battle casualty: "That instant his head blew by me like a bursting Paixhan shot, and the flag of Ned Knowles himself was hauled down forever. We dragged his hull to one side" (Ch. LXXV, p. 303).

However, Jack Chase extends the metaphor to include a life-flag analogy, for the hauling down of Ned Knowles' flag implies an analogy between a man succumbing to his death and a ship surrendering to her enemy. Later, in a grandiloquent mock-heroic speech, Jack Chase draws a similar analogy between the shaving of his beard and the hauling down of a ship's flag: "Yea, barber! it has streamed like an admiral's pennant at the mast-head of this same gallant frigate, the Neversink! Oh! barber, barber! it stabs me to the heart! Talk not of hauling

down your ensigns and standards when vanquished--what is that, barber! to striking the flag that Nature herself has nailed to the mast!" (Ch. LXXXV, p. 340). However, Ned Knowles' flag signifies life while Jack Chase's beard-flag represents manhood: "Barber, I will absolve you...though you are about to sheer off my manhood" (Ch. LXXXV, p. 340). White Jacket reasserts, "The beard is the token of manhood" (Ch. LXXXVII, p. 347) in explaining why Ushant, the venerable Captain of the Forecastle, chooses flogging to shaving his beard "streaming like a commodor's bougee" (Ch. LXXXVII, p. 343).

Ushant himself extends the metaphor to include a backbone-mainmast analogy. White Jacket reports, "About his waist was a broad boarder's belt, which he wore, he said, to brace his mainmast, meaning his backbone" (Ch. LXXXVI, p. 342). Since the "gun's crew carried small flags in their bosoms, to nail to the mast in case the ship's colours were shot away " (Ch. LXXV, p. 302), each man becomes in effect, a miniature mast himself.

The mainmast not only symbolizes the common seaman but also epitomizes the Neversink as it unites the physical areas of the ship as well as her company. The Neversink is medianly bisected into a starboard side and a port side, centrally bisected into a forecastle and a quarter-deck, and laterally dissected into the masts, a spar deck, a gun deck, and a berth deck. These ship's divisions separate the ship's company, since each man is more or less permanently assigned to a post within one of these areas. White Jacket, for example, "permanently

belonged to the starboard watch, one of the two primary grand divisions of the ship's company. And in this watch he was a main-top man, that is, was stationed in the main-top with a number of other seamen, always in readiness to execute any orders pertaining to the mainmast, from above the main-yard. For, including the main-yard, and below it to the deck, the mainmast belongs to another detachment" (Ch. III, p. 21). Each of the ship's major areas and crew constitutes a self-contained world of its own, itself often divided. Life and society were highly structured, and the multi-leveled, many compartmented man-of-war illustrates this. The sole unifying factor of both ship and company is the mainmast.

The mainmast not only epitomizes the man-of-war Neversink but also epitomizes the novel White Jacket as it unites the symbolic areas of the ship and the action of the novel. The area before the mainmast serves both as court where the people of the forecastle are tried by the aristocracy of the quarter-deck and as yard of execution where the people are subjugated for the aristocracy: the people are flogged before the mainmast, keel-hauled from the main-yards, or hanged from a main-yard by order of the aristocracy. During battle as the enemy attempts to cripple the ship by dismasting her, the area around the mainmast turns into a slaughterhouse where the people of the forecastle suffer and die for the glory and gain of the aristocracy of the quarter-deck. Nevertheless, in the top of the mainmast White Jacket discovers poetry, philosophy, and comradship; the final scene aboard the Neversink finds "we main-top men are all aloft in the top; and round our mast we

circle, a brother-band, hand in hand, all spliced together" (Ch. XCIII, p. 373). However, at the base of the mainmast White Jacket has discovered the antitheses of poetry, philosophy, and comradship; many previous scenes aboard the Neversink "detail all the paltry irritabilities, jealousies, and cabals, the spiteful detractions and animosities, that lurk far down, and cling to the very kelson of the ship" (Ch. LXXXIX, p.353). The unifying factor of ship and action is again the mainmast.

Melville's symbolism of parts of the ship transfigures Shenly, Ned Knowles, and Ushant into microcosms of their ship. Melville's symbolism of the ship herself attempts to transfigure the Neversink into a microcosm of the world through the use of nautical analogies in the last chapter:

> As a man-of-war that sails through the seas, so this earth that sails through the air. We mortals are all on board a fast-sailing, never-sinking, world-frigate, of which God was the shipwright; and she is but one craft in a Milky-Way fleet, of which God is the Lord High Admiral. The port we sail from is forever astern. And though far out of sight of land, for ages and ages we continue to sail with sealed orders, and our last destination remains a secret to ourselves and our officers; yet our final haven was predestined ere we slipped from our stocks at Creation ("The End," pp. 374-375).

As L. R. Thompson notes, neither analogy nor allegory was original: "With overt and deceptive blandness, Melville takes a familiar and threadbare Christian analogy as the foundation on which to erect his allegorical frame: life is a voyage homeward, toward Heaven. This is certainly innocent enough. The many possible extensions are also familiar conventions in Christian literature: this earth is a floating ship in which we sail; society may be represented by the passengers,

the crew, the officers; but God is our omnipotent captain."[7]

Melville appears somewhat less than philosophically comfortable with his borrowed allegory. He hints at its shallowness: "Outwardly regarded, our craft is a lie; for all that is outwardly seen of it is the clean-swept deck, and oft-painted planks comprised above the water-line; whereas, the vast mass of our fabric, with all its storerooms of secrets, forever slides along far under the surface" ("The End," pp. 375-376). But he is unwilling as of yet to abandon the comforting certainty of shallowness for the disturbing uncertainty of profundity: "Believe not the hypochondriac dwellers below hatches, who will tell you, with a sneer, that our world-frigate is bound to no final harbour whatever; that our voyage will prove an endless circumnavigation of space. Not so" ("The End," p. 375).

And Melville appears something less than artistically proficient with his borrowed allegory. It is not an integral part of the novel. The final chapter adds allegorical meaning to the obvious documentary meaning of the sub-title, The World in a Man-of-War. But the sub-title may have been an afterthought since the final chapter appears to be an allegorical graft upon a documentary stock. There is little or no organic development of the allegory in between sub-title and "The End."

And Melville appears somehow less than intellectually interested in his borrowed allegory. He was apparently so preoccupied with producing documentary that the Neversink fails to transcend her identity as an American war vessel. And he was apparently so intent upon

grinding out propaganda that she fails to evolve into a convincing microcosm of the world. Melville was apparently least concerned with creating art, and his borrowed allegory proved too unwieldy for its narrow subject. Or as Melville might have preferred to say, it proved too much sail for such a light craft.

Melville's self-avowed intention in writing White Jacket was to produce a documentary "to give some idea of the interior life in a man-of-war." Melville was successful; his account appears realistic, accurate, and complete almost to the point of becoming tedious and boring. His didactic urge to name and describe threatens to become an end rather than a means because he fails to exercise enough artistic selectivity.

Melville's unavowed intention in writing White Jacket was to grind out a propaganda tract to expose the inhumane treatment afforded the common seaman by the United States Navy. He was apparently successful here also since no less an authority than an American admiral reportedly credited White Jacket for ensuing legislation and naval reform ("Introduction," p. vii). Melville had successfully turned a documentary into a propaganda tract.

Melville's third apparent intention in writing White Jacket was to create an allegory. Here he was not completely successful. His allegory appears to be turning into propaganda rather than his propaganda turning into allegory. However, he has rediscovered both the symbolic possibilities of areas and parts of the ship and the allegorical potential

of the whole ship. The homeward-bound cruise of the Neversink was truly a shake-down cruise for the outward-bound cruise of the Pequod.

CHAPTER II

The Pequod

Melville's use of symbolic areas within the whaleship Pequod may also be classified by the same two methods--(1) vertical aloft-below symbolism and (2) horizontal fore-aft symbolism. Again Melville was forced to create his own aloft-below symbolism, although he found his fore-aft symbolism extant within naval tradition: "Now, the grand distinction drawn between officer and man at sea, is this--the first lives aft, the last forward."[8]

Like White Jacket, Ishmael reflects the traditional awe of the captain on his quarter-deck as well as in his cabin: "Meanwhile Captain Ahab remained invisibly enshrined within his cabin" (Ch. XXI, p. 100). "Yes, their supreme lord and dictator was there, though hitherto unseen by any eyes not permitted to penetrate into the now sacred retreat of the cabin" (Ch. XXVIII, p. 119). "As I levelled my glance towards the taffrail, foreboding shivers ran over me. Reality outran apprehension; Captain Ahab stood upon his quarter-deck" (Ch. XXVIII, p. 120). Ishmael's shipmates reflect much the same awe: "Standing, for the most part, on the hallowed precincts of the quarter-deck, they were careful not to speak or rustle their feet" (Ch. XLIII, p. 194).

And like White Jacket, Ishmael realizes, at least unconsciously, that the spell emanates more from the quarter-deck than from the man. Aboard a whaleship at sea, Ishmael observes, "The punctilious externals, at least, of the quarter-deck are seldom materially relaxed, and in no

instance done away. Indeed, many are the Nantucket ships in which you will see the skipper parading his quarter-deck with an elated grandeur not surpassed in any military navy; nay, extorting almost as much outward homage as if he wore the imperial purple, and not the shabbiest of pilot-cloth" (Ch. XXXIII, p. 144).

Perhaps the mystique of the medieval aefter-castel again explains the transformation of captain into king, quarter-deck into castle, and ship into kingdom. Under its influence, Ishmael sees Ahab seated on an ivory stool upon his quarter-deck and is reminded of the sea -loving Danish kings seated upon thrones of Narwhale tusks in old Norse times. Ishmael then transforms Ahab into a "Khan of the plank, and a king of the sea, and a great lord of Leviathans" (Ch. XXX, p. 126). And dining within his cabin, Ahab and his mates resemble the "Coronation banquet at Frankfort, where the German Emperor profoundly dines with the seven Imperial Electors" (Ch. XXXIV, p. 147).

Under the influence of this mystique, "independent, hilarious little Flask enters King Ahab's presence, in the character of Abjectus, or the Slave" because "while in the open air of the deck some officers will, upon provocation, bear themselves boldly and defyingly enough towards their commander; yet, ten to one, let those very officers the next moment go down to their customary dinner in that same commander's cabin, and straightway their inoffensive, not to say deprecatory and humble air towards him, as he sits at the head of the table; this is marvellous, sometimes most comical" (Ch. XXXIV, p. 146).

The disastrous potential of this mystique lending itself to despotism is clearly revealed by an anlysis presented by Ishmael:

> Nor, perhaps, will it fail to be eventually perceived, that behind those forms and usages, as it were, he sometimes masked himself; incidentally making use of them for other and more private ends than they were legitimately intended to subserve. That certain sultanism of his brain...through those forms... became incarnate in an irresistible dictatorship. For be a man's intellectual superiority what it will, it can never assume the practical, available supremacy over other men, without the aid of some sort of external arts and entrenchments, always, in themselves, more or less paltry and base.... Such large virtue lurks in these small things when extreme political superstitions invest them, that in some royal instances even to idiot imbecility they have imparted potency (Ch. XXXIII, p. 144).

Ishmael's analysis reveals Ahab as an actor-king in a power play he has carefully plotted. Ahab stages his great scenes upon the quarter-deck from his theatrical delayed entrance through his melodramatic black mass and his histrionic needle magnetizing. And he disguises his true identity in the traditions and mystique of the quarter-deck: "Behind those forms and usages...he sometimes masked himself."

The quarter-deck and cabin with their tradition and mystique serve as Ahab's "external arts and entrenchments." Like these "small things when extreme political superstitions invest them, that in some royal instances even to idiot imbecility they have imparted potency," the quarter-deck and cabin when powerful naval tradition and the mystique of the aefter-castel imbue them impart potency to mad insanity. Ahab gains his power "through those forms....For be a man's intellectual superiority what it will, it can never assume the practical, available

supremacy over other men, without the aid of some sort of external arts and entrenchments," and he maintains it through the same arts and entrenchments.

So Ahab can ill afford an interruption to the voyage which would break the spell of the aefter-castel and constitute an interregnum, for this could portend both the end of the voyage and the end of his reign. For Ahab is king only as long as he is in command of his quarter-deck and the Pequod is sailing the high seas, for his ship ceases to be a kingdom when she enters port, and his quarter-deck then ceases to be his castle, and then Ahab himself ceases to be king.

If Captain Ahab is king, then his mates are his knights, and the harpooneers are their squires (Chapters XXVI and XXVII, "Knights and Squires"), and the remainder of the crew should represent the common people. However, as the advocate of the whaleman, Ishmael refutes the implication of the question, "No good blood in their veins?" with the rebuttal, "They have something better than royal blood there," "Whaling not respectable?" with "Whaling is imperial!", and "No dignity in whaling?" with "Drive down your hat in presence of the Czar, and take it off to Queequeg!" (Ch. XXIV, pp. 109-110). These themes are dilated upon in "The Honor and Glory of Whaling" (Chapter LXXXXII).

Ishmael views the crew as a "kingly commons" over which the "just Spirit of Equality...hast spread one royal mantle of humanity" (Ch. XXVI, p. 114). "But this august dignity I treat of, is not the dignity of kings and robes, but that abounding dignity which has no robed investiture. Thou shalt see it shining in the arm that wields a pick or drives a spike;

that democratic dignity which, on all hands, radiates without end from God; Himself! The great God absolute! The centre and circumference of all democracy! His omnipresence, our divine equality!" (Ch. XXVI, p. 114). The kingly-commons has replaced both king and commons.

Thus the distinction between quarter-deck and forecastle aboard the Pequod is no longer the king-commons polarity of the Neversink, for the "royal mantle of humanity" rests upon the entire crew of the forecastle, creating a kingly-commons: "Had you descended from the Pequod's try-works to the Pequod's forecastle, where the off duty watch were sleeping, for one single moment you would have almost thought you were standing in some illuminated shrine of canonized kings and counselors. There they lay in their triangular oaken vaults, each mariner a chiselled muteness; a score of lamps flashing upon his hooded eyes" (Ch. XCVII, p. 423). And despite his quarter-deck and its mystique, Ahab is not an actual king as Charles Feidelson points out, but one of the kingly-commons also:[9] "But Ahab, my Captain, still moves before me in all his Nantucket grimness and shagginess; and in this episode touching Emperors and Kings, I must not conceal that I have only to do with a poor old whale-hunter like him" (Ch. XXXIII, p. 145).

The distinction between quarter-deck and forecastle aboard the Pequod is revealed by "The Town-Ho's Story" (Chapter LIV), which the crew of the Pequod's forecastle "kept...secret among themselves so that it never transpired abaft the Pequod's main-mast" (Ch. LIV, p. 241).

The Town-Ho was literally divided between quarter-deck and forecastle by a barricade while she was figuratively divided between quarter-deck and forecastle by a mutiny instigated by a mate who threatened the "immaculate manliness" and "democratic dignity" of one of the forecastle's kingly-commons (Ch. XXVI, p. 114). The mate's death in the jaws of Moby Dick would appear to be divine retribution, prefiguring Ahab's own death.

So the distinction between quarter-deck and forecastle is no longer the king-commons polarity of the Neversink, but the kingly-commons disunity of the Pequod. Ahab creates this disunity for himself through his failure to recognize the innate rights and privileges of the kingly-commons for others or the inherent limits and responsibilities of the kingly-commons for himself. As Starbuck observes, "Who's over him, he cries;--aye, he would be a democrat to all above; look, how he lords it over all below!" (Ch. XXXVIII, p. 167). While Ishmael resolves this disunity for himself through his recognition of the fundamental worth and dignity of the kingly-commons and his own innate love, respect, and responsiblity for the kingly-commons.

While White Jacket loses no opportunity to portray the forecastle as the sanctuary of industry, sense, and humanity, Ishmael seizes the opportunity to present the forecastle as the symbol of fellowship, democracy, and salvation; and while White Jacket portrays the quarter-deck as the seat of incompetence, folly, and inhumanity, Ishmael presents the quarter-deck as the symbol of alienation, autocracy, and destruction. And just as the polarity of forecastle and quarter-deck

aboard the Neversink represents the polarity of officers and common seamen or at the broadest, royalty and people, the disunity of forecastle and quarter-deck aboard the Pequod symbolizes the disunity of all mankind.

Melville's horizontal fore-aft symbolism proved quite adequate to convey his political and sociological philosophy. No longer needing the masts as a means of developing his kingly-commons theme, or the hold as a vessel for conveying his anti-navy propaganda, Melville was free to develop his aloft-below symbolism along psychological and philosophical lines.

Melville introduces the masthead and endows it with special if ambiguous significance rather subtly by having Father Mapple declare his pulpit to be a masthead (Ch. IX, p. 46) and argue by analogy that delight exceeds woe: "But oh! shipmates! on the starboard hand of every woe, there is sure delight; and higher the top of that delight, than the bottom of the woe is deep. Is not the main-truck higher than the kelson is low?" (Ch. IX, pp. 47-48). And finally, he characterizes the most exalted of delight as "top-gallant delight" (Ch. IX, p. 48).

White Jacket becomes a literal masthead stander when his watch at the masthead comes around. And standing upon the top-gallant cross-trees, he experiences "top-gallant delight." "In the serene weather of the tropics it is exceedingly pleasant the mast-head (sic); nay, to a dreamy meditative man it is delightful. There you stand, a hundred feel above the silent decks...lost in the infinite series of the sea, with nothing ruffled but the waves. The tranced ship indolently

rolls; the drowsy trade winds blow; everything resolves you into languor" (Ch. XXXV, p. 153).

This "top-gallant delight" is the cause of a loss of identity: "Lulled into such an opium-like listlessness of vacant, unconscious reverie is this absent-minded youth by the blending cadence of waves with thoughts, that at last he loses his identity; takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature; and every strange, half-seen, gliding, beautiful thing that eludes him; every dimly-discovered, uprising fin of some undiscernible form, seems to him the embodiment of those elusive thoughts that only people the soul by continually flitting through it. In this enchanted mood, thy spirit ebbs away to whence it came; becomes diffused through time and space...(Ch. XXXV, pp. 156-157).

Paul Brodtkorb, Jr. observes that for the masthead climber "moving upward is to aspire, finally, to some static, ultimate knowledge of and identity with Being." Ishmael ascends to the masthead to escape from the "endless flux of time and from circular, horizontal motion." However, this escape is only temporary, for "as soon as movement, time, and identity return, the stasis is broken."[10] "But while this sleep, this dream is on ye, move your foot or hand an inch; slip your hold at all; and your identity comes back in horror. Over Descartian vortices you hover. And perhaps, at mid-day, in the fairest weather, with one half-throttled shriek you drop through that transparent air into the summer sea, no more to rise for ever" (Ch. XXXV, p. 157).

If the top is an idyllic philosophic dream world, the hold is a devilish psychological nightmare world. The "half-seen, gliding, beautiful thing" and "dimly-discovered, uprising fin" become the rapacious sharks startling sleepers "by the sharp slapping of their tails against the hull, within a few inches of the sleepers' hearts" (Ch. LXIV, p. 291). The hold is closely associated with sleep. The starboard watch sleeping in the forecastle is likened by a sailor to the ground-tier butts which lie horizontally fore and aft along the bottom of the hold (Ch. XL, p. 170). Upon developing a leak, these casks are hoisted "from that black midnight," "disturbing the slumbers of the huge ground-tier butts" (Ch. CX, p. 472).

Ishmael like White Jacket is fascinated by the dark mysterious hold and its venerable contents: "So deep did they go; and so ancient, and corroded, and weedy the aspect of the lowermost puncheons, that you almost looked next for some mouldy corner-stone cask containing coins of Captain Noah" (Ch. CX, p. 472). And like White Jacket, Ishmael compares the hold to catacombs and subterranean vaults. The casks are "gigantic moles" and the "tatooed savage" Queequeg descending into the "gloom of the hold, and bitterly sweating all day in that subterraneous confinement" was "crawling about amid that dampness and slime, like a green spotted lizard at the bottom of a well" (Ch. CX, pp. 472-473).

Uniting these images of sleep, subterranean vaults, and the primitive consciousness is Fedallah and his heathenish band who are first perceived as sounds in the hold like "two or three sleepers

turning over" (Ch. XLIII, p. 194) and as a "subterranean laugh" (Ch. XXXVI, pp. 162-163). Ishmael later describes Fedallah as "such a creature as civilized, domestic people in the temperate zone only see in their dreams, and that but dimly," but who glides among unchanging Asiatic communities and Oriental isles, "which even in these modern days still preserve much of the ghostly aboriginalness of earth's primal generations" (Ch. L, p. 230).

Melville's use of symbolic objects concerning the whaleship Pequod may also be divided into two groups--(1) symbolism of parts of the ship and (2) symbolism of the ship herself. Melville's object symbolism, as Walter E. Bezanson observes, can be based upon a simple object connoting primarily one thing or upon a complex object conveying multiple, ambiguous, or nonequatable meanings. And "whereas the object-symbols in a sense carry the 'plot,' elucidating the experience of young Ishmael, Ahab, the mates and crew (as well as serving the narrator), the image-symbols chiefly reveal the psyche of the narrator through images of procreation and animality, mechanization and monomania, enchantment and entombment."[11]

However, "The Line" (Chapter LX) presents the whale-line both as an object-symbol and as an image-symbol. The detailed description of the preparation, storage, and utilization of the line provides more than the mere didactic or documentary information of White Jacket. By explaining the mechanization of the whale-line, this chapter carries the plot by elucidating the later throttling of Ahab by his own whale-line. But it also reveals the psyche of the narrator, for as Henry Nash Smith observes, the following passage reveals an "almost physical apprehension toward the machine" and industrialization:[12] "For, when the line is

darting out, to be seated then in the boat, is like being seated in the midst of the manifold whizzings of a steam-engine in full play, when every flying beam, and shaft, and wheel, is grazing you" (Ch. LX, p. 280).

Melville's development as an artist is particularly evident in "The Line," for whereas, in White Jacket he allowed symbol to yield to documentary and to serve propaganda, here in Moby-Dick, Melville distorts his factual description of the path of the whale-line, which as Feidelson notes, in reality, runs down the center of the boat (Feidelson, p. 371, n. 8): "Thus the whale-line folds the whole boat in its complicated coils, twisting and writhing around it in almost every direction. All the oarsmen are involved in its perilous contortions.... Nor can any son of mortal woman, for the first time, seat himself amid those hempen intricacies, and while straining his utmost at the oar, bethink him that at any unknown instant the harpoon may be darted, and all these horrible contortions be put in play like ringed lightnings" (Ch. LX, p. 280). Documentary now yields to symbolism and serves art.

The whale-line is at least an ambivalent if not multivalent symbol, for it is also obviously a fatalistic symbol: "All men live enveloped in whale-lines. All are born with halters round their necks; but it is only when caught in the swift, sudden turn of death, that mortals realize the silent, subtle, ever-present perils of life" (Ch. LX, p. 281). When Starbuck is assigned to watch the rope by which Ahab is suspended helpless above the deck, this rope also becomes a fatalistic symbol, although its meaning is more ambiguous than is that

of the whale-line: "Because in such a wilderness of running rigging, whose various different relations aloft cannot always be infallibly discerned by what is seen of them at the deck; and when the deck-ends of these ropes are being every few minutes cast down from the fastenings, it would be but a natural fatality, if, unprovided with a constant watchman, the hoisted sailor should by some carelessness of the crew be cast adrift and fall all swooping to the sea" (Ch. CXXX, p. 530).

Melville dilates upon this theme in "The Monkey-rope" (Chapter LXXII). Ishmael, as bowsman of Queequeg's boat, is responsible for the manipulation of the monkey-rope which prevents the harpooneer from slipping from the oily, revolving carcass of the submerged whale during the cutting-in operation. Ahab and Queequeg both depend upon the diligence and devotion of the man tending the other end of the rope which connects them. However, Starbuck is only psychologically tied to Ahab above him, for the rope which connects them to one another does not bind him, while Ishmael is physically bound by the monkey-rope which connects him to the savage below him. In order to more fully develop the monkey-rope as both a fatalistic symbol and a symbol of societal ties, Melville has taken liberties with the monkey-rope just as he did with the whale-line. However, here he has indirectly acknowledged this by footnoting that the practice of tying the bowsman to the harpooneer was peculiar to the Pequod (Ch. LXXII, p. 319).

The alteration enables Melville to demonstrate both the necessity of societal bonds and the dangers of them:

> Should poor Queequeg sink to rise no more, then both usage and honor demanded, that instead of cutting the cord, it should drag me down in his wake....nor could I any way get rid of the dangerous liabilities which the hempen bond entailed.
>
> So strongly and metaphysically did I conceive of my situation then, that while earnestly watching his motions, I seemed distinctly to perceive that my own individuality was now merged in a joint stock company of two: that my free will had received a mortal wound; and that another's mistake or misfortune might plunge innocent me into unmerited disaster and death (Ch. LXXII, p. 318).

And the alteration enables Melville to develop the monkey-rope as a symbol of or lesson in fatalism.

Ahab also perceives man's fatalistic destiny mirrored in physical objects aboard the Pequod, as he observes to Starbuck, "By heaven, man, we are turned round and round in this world, like yonder windless, and Fate is the handspike" (Ch. CXXXII, p. 536). This image is as striking and dramatic as Bosola's lament in The Duchess of Malfi that, "We are merely the stars' tennis-balls, struck and banded / Which way please them"(V. iv. 54-55). However, this piece of imagistic symbolism has even greater physical reality and psychological truth since the generative object is a concrete reality rather than an abstract concept for Ahab; and its generation into a fatalistic symbol reflecting Ahab's perception of life is therefore a more natural and organic growth.

Melville used the whole ship as well as individual objects aboard her as a fatalistic symbol. The sailing ship was particularly well suited, being subject to the whims of the wind. While no wind at all might becalm her, too much wind could render her unmanageable.

In Brodtkorb's words, "When it is sufficiently violent, it can wholly determine a ship's speed and direction of motion, regardless of any efforts to modify these that the crew might make." Brodtkorb views Ahab as experiencing the wind as fate and the agent of the gods (Brodtkorb, p. 29): "In tempestuous times like these, after everything above and aloft has been secured, nothing more can be done but passively to await the issue of the gale. Then Captain and crew become practical fatalists" (Ch. LI, p. 233).

Ishmael also observes that "during the violence of the gale, [the helmsman] had only steered according to its vicissitudes" (Ch. CXXIII, p. 506), and that "the ship is but a tossed shuttlecock to the blast" (Ch. CXXIII, p. 505), again echoing Webster's tennis-ball image. Melville makes the symbolic nature of the ship even more explicit in the following passage: "The hand of Fate had snatched all their souls; and by the stirring perils of the previous day; the rack of the past night's suspense; the fixed, unfearing, blind, reckless way in which their wild craft went plunging towards its flying mark; by all these things, their hearts were bowled along. The wind that made great bellies of their sails, and rushed the vessel on by arms invisible as irresistible; this seemed the symbol of that unseen agency which so enslaved them to the race" (Ch. CXXXIV, p. 548).

Melville utilized the entire ship as a symbol of futility as well as of fatalism: "Side by side the world-wandering whale ships lay silent and safely moored at last; while from others came a sound of carpenters

and coopers, with blended noises of fires and forges to melt the pitch, all betokening that new cruises were on the start; that one most perilous and long voyage ended, only begins a second; and a second ended, only begins a third, and so on, for ever and for aye. Such is the endlessness, yea, the intolerableness of all earthly effort" (Ch. XIII, p. 59). The voyaging ship makes a perfect symbol for the futility of life, for as Brodtkorb states, the motion of the ship is necessarily circular (Brodtkorb, p. 36): "Round the world! There is much in that sound to inspire proud feelings; but whereto does all that circumnavigation conduct? Only through numberless perils to the very point whence we started, where those that we left behind secure, were all the time before us" (Ch. LII, p. 236).

Brodtkorb asserts that there are only thre possible modes of escape from the "horizontal rotation of the vortex" (Brodtkorb, pp. 37-38). There is stasis in the midst of the vortex (Brodtkorb, p. 37); however, even if motion seems circular and futile, it is necessary to avoid stagnation and boredom (Brodtkorb, p. 113). Vertical movement also breaks out of circularity, and the Pequod unsuccessfully attempts such escape: "The strange, upheaving, lifting tendency of the taffrail breeze filling the hollows of so many sails, made the buoyant, hovering deck to feel like air beneath the feet; while still she rushed along, as if two antagonistic influences were struggling in her--one to mount direct to heaven, the other to drive yawingly to some horizontal goal" (Ch. LI, p. 231). But as Brodtkorb also states

vertical movement can also be downward and irreversible, such as the vortex which pulls the Pequod down for eternity (Brodtkorb, p. 38).

Melville clearly intends the Pequod to reflect Ishmael's fate. After a period of stagnation upon shore, Ishmael, like the whaleship must begin a voyage or become a destructive force both to himself and to society. However, the best he can hope for is to return to his starting point. Ishmael's attempt to break out of this circularity by climbing the mast is doomed to defeat in that he can not remain aloft perpetually, and vertical movement upward inherently places one in danger of vertical movement downward. This involves both physical death in the fall from the masthead of the first man to mount it upon reaching the Equatorial hunting grounds, and the ambiguous fate of the man's soul. And it involves psychological death in the madness of Pip, who fell into the sea and drowned mentally, although he survived physically. In Brodtkorb's words, "The vortex can be emblematic of internal composure, but it is also a means to death. Vertical movement can break out of circularity, but it involves the terrors of self-dissolution. Those who have broken out of circularity can speak of what they have experienced only in the riddling language of madness (Brodtkorb, p. 113).

The sailing ship, though not necessarily the Pequod herself, also provides a symbol for man's intellectual fate as well as his physical and psychological fate. Melville utilizes the circular voyaging of the ship to trace man's voyaging through the intellectual ages of man: "There is no steady unretracing progress in this life; we do not advance through fixed gradations, and at the last one pause:--through infancy's

unconscious spell, boyhood's thoughtless faith, adolescence' doubt (the common doom), then scepticism, then disbelief, resting at last in manhood's pondering repose of If. But once gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys, and men, and Ifs eternally. Where lies the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more? In what rapt ether sails the world, of which the weariest will never weary?" (Ch. CXIV, pp. 486-487).

The large painting hanging in Father Mapple's chapel "representing a gallant ship beating against a terrible storm off a lee coast of black rocks and snowy breakers" (Ch. VIII, p. 38), seems to be the model for the "storm-tossed ship, that miserably drives along the leeward land" (Ch. XXIII, p. 105), which symbolizes Bulkington's intellectual as well as physical and psychological isolation from mankind: "The port would fain give succor; the port is pitiful; in the port is safety, comfort, hearth-stone, supper, warm blankets, friends, all that's kind to our mortalities, but in that gale, the port, the land, is that ship's direst jeopardy; she must fly all hospitality; one touch of land, though it but graze the keel, would make her shudder through and through. With all her might she crowds all sail off shore; in so doing, fights 'gainst the very winds that fain would blow her homeward; seeks all the lashed sea's landlessness again; for refuge's sake forlornly rushing into peril; her only friend her bitterest foe!" (Ch. XXIII, p. 105).

Melville clarifies the meaning of his ship symbolism by stating

that "all deep, earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea; while the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the treacherous, slavish shore?" (Ch. XXIII, p. 105). In the "sea of thought," as Feidelson terms it (p. 149, n. 7), or "landlessness," in Melville's words, "alone resides the highest truth" (Ch. XXIII, p. 105). Melville states that it is better to perish in this "howling infinite, than be ingloriously dashed upon the lee" (Ch. XXIII, p. 105), which Feidelson interprets as the "spiritual security of the land" (Feidelson, p. 149, n. 7).

However glorious, landlessness or intellectual voyaging is just as fraught with danger as is the lee shore: "Were this world an endless plain, and by sailing eastward we could for ever reach new distances, and discover sights more sweet and strange than any Cyclades or Island of King Solomon, then there were promise in the voyage. But in pursuit of those far mysteries we dream of, or in tormented chase of that demon phantom that, some time or other, swims before all human hearts; while chasing such over this round globe, they either lead us on in barren mazes or midway leave us whelmed" (Ch. LII, p. 236).

And thus by evoking the destruction of the Pequod, which was midway whelmed between her point of departure and her point of destination, which were one and the same, or a barren maze, Melville utilizes the ship, and the Pequod here in particular, to symbolize the intellectual dilemma and tragedy of man. Even if he escapes the "treacherous, slavish shore," he is doomed to horizontal and thus circular thought until he stagnates or is overwhelmed.

In White Jacket, Melville attempted to transform man into a physical microcosm of the ship, while in Moby-Dick, he transforms the ship into a macrocosm of intellectual man. On the other hand, in White Jacket, Melville attempted to transfigure the Neversink into a superficial microcosm of the world, while in Moby-Dick, he successfully transfigures the Pequod into a profound microcosm of the world. As in White Jacket, the world is also compared by analogy to a ship. Echoing White Jacket, Stubb muses in Moby-Dick, "I wonder, Flask, whether the world is anchored anywhere; if she is, she swings with an uncommon long cable, though" (Ch. CXXI, p. 504). However, the world-ship analogies of Moby-Dick are more organic than those of White Jacket, in that they grow naturally out of character and situation rather than being grafted artifically on.

Upon studying Father Mapple's pulpit, whose "panelled front was in the likeness of a ship's bluff bows, and the Holy Bible rested on the projecting piece of scroll work, fashioned after a ship's fiddle-headed beak" (Ch. VIII, p. 39), it is only natural for Ishmael to draw the following religious analogy between a ship and the world, especially in that he so desperately seeks reassurance: "What could be more full of meaning?--for the pulpit is ever this earth's foremost part; all the rest comes in its rear; the pulpit leads the world. From thence it is the storms of God's quick wrath is first descried, and the bow must bear the earliest brunt. From then it is the God of breezes fair or foul is first invoked for favorable winds. Yes, the

world's a ship on its passage out, and not a voyage complete; and the pulpit is its prow" (Ch. VIII, p. 39).

Father Mapple then proceeds to utilize the world-ship analogy to clinch his sermon, "Delight is to him whose strong arms yet support him, when the ship of this base treacherous world has gone down beneath him" (Ch. IX, p. 48). Ironically and ambiguously, this figurative description of Ahab's psychological fate prefigures the literal description of his physical fate. One of Ahab's own world-ship analogies also prefigures his physical fate while revealing his psychological state: "In her murderous hold this frigate earth is ballasted with bones of millions of the drowned" (Ch. LXX, p. 310). As Feidelson observes in a footnote to this passage, "The earth itself is like a ship of death, with the sea as her hold, and the drowned as her ballast" (Feidelson, p. 405, n. 4). Interestingly, Melville reverts to the image of the frigate here, in preference to the image of the ship in general or the whaleship in particular. Melville's use of world-ship analogies lays the groundwork upon which to build allegory.

Ishmael is instrumental in creating this allegory, in great part, implicitly, by stressing the independency of the whaleship by virtue of its huge store of food, drink, and equipment in "All Astir" (Chapter XX) and in "The Decanter" (Chapter CI); the length of the voyage--"By far the longest of all voyages now or ever made by man" (Ch. XXXII, p. 143); and the national and cultural diversity of the crew--"An Anacharsis Clootz deputation from all the isles of the sea,

and all the ends of the earth, accompanying Old Ahab in the Pequod to lay the world's grievances before that bar from which not very many of them ever come back" (Ch. XXVII, pp. 118-119). The whaleship in general and the Pequod in particular is a virtual ark unto itself: "Hence it is, that, while other ships may have gone to China from New York, and back again, touching at a score of ports, the whale-ship, in all that interval, may not have sighted one grain of soil; her crew having seen no man but floating seamen like themselves. So that did you carry them the news that another flood had come; they would only answer--'Well, boys, here's the ark!'" (Ch. LXXXVII, p. 379).

However, Brodtkorb also notes that "When [Ishmael allegorizes], though, it should be noted that Ishmael's explicit allegory is discontinuous. It is a matter of chapters rather than an unbroken sequence of systematic meaning throughout the book. Even his strongly implicit allegory is not serially coherent: the Pequod, for example, may carry aboard it all the races of mankind, and thus tentatively suggest an allegorical world-ship 'on its passage out' (VIII), but as soon as it meets another ship also containing men, that reference is submerged. The allegory here exists only long enough to assert the hidden typicality of this seemingly untypical ship, then its presence fades" (Brodtkorb, p. 140).

Ishmael, of course, insists that the whale not be interpreted as a "hideous and intolerable allegory" (Ch. XLV, p. 203), and so it might be argued that he would protest so interpreting the ship. However,

the key to Ishmael's objection most probably lies in the qualifiers "hideous" and "intolerable," rather than in the noun "allegory." As Richard Chase points out, unlike Ahab, the rigid allegorist who equates white whales with evil and only evil, Ishmael sees ambiguity and therefore can not tolerate rigid allegory.[13] But as Brodtkorb points out, Ishmael himself not only allegorizes, but does so explicitly with interpretive commentary or implicitly in such a manner that none is needed (Brodtkorb, pp. 140-141). And like Ahab, Ishmael often chooses the ship as the subject of his allegory.

CHAPTER III

Ahab and the Pequod

Ahab, the rigid allegorist, pronounces, "O Nature, and O soul of man! how far beyond all utterance are your linked analogies! not the smallest atom stirs or lives on matter, but has its cunning duplicate in mind" (Ch. LXX, p. 310). The linked analogies of Moby-Dick are invariably drawn among Ahab, the Pequod, and Moby Dick. M. O. Percival notes analogies between the lines on Ahab's brow, and the lines on Moby Dick's forehead and the lines on the charts which plot both their courses.[14] Feidelson points out the comparison between the chart-brow analogy and the deck-brow analogy (Feidelson, p. 267, n. 1). However, the Pequod is the common denominator in the Ahab-Pequod and Pequod-Moby Dick analogies which links the analogies of the "soul of man" and "Nature."

The Pequod is unique in many ways, and each renders her a little less like her sister whaleships and a little more like her hereditary enemy the whale. In place of the traditional ship's wheel, the Pequod sports a tiller fashioned from the jaw bone of a whale. In place of wooden blocks, the Pequod's tackle runs over sheaves of "sea-ivory." In place of belaying pins, the Pequod's "open bulwarks were garnished like one continuous jaw, with the long sharp teeth of the sperm whale" (Ch. XVI, p. 69). As Brodtkorb observes, the Pequod looks like a whale because she wears "the chased bones of her enemies"

(Ch. XVI, p. 69). The full quote, however, reads, "A cannibal of a craft, tricking herself forth in the chased bones of her enemies" (Ch. XVI, p. 69), which implies that she not only looks like a whale, but also must be one: if she is a cannibal because she hunts and consumes whales and then decorates herself with their bones, consequently she must be a whale herself. In fact, Ishmael notes that during the trying out of a whale, "the entire ship seems great leviathan himself" (Ch. XCVIII, p. 425).

Not only does the Pequod look like a whale in general, but she possesses at least one striking similarity to Moby Dick in particular. Whaleships like sperm whales are generally black. However, the Pequod like Moby Dick may be an exception to that rule in that she is repeatedly referred to as the "ivory Pequod" (Ch. XLVIII, p. 22 / Ch. LI, p. 230). This may be taken literally since Ishmael describes "her old hull's complexion" as being "darkened like a French grenadier's" (Ch. XVI, p. 68), and it is difficult to imagine that the traditional dead black color of a whaleship could be further darkened, and that if it could, there ever existed a French grenadier dark enough to make the simile plausible let alone apt. However, even if the expression "ivory Pequod" is construed figuratively as a synecdoche, the sensory impressions of the color of whale and ship are strikingly similar.

Not only does the Pequod look like a whale, Moby Dick in particular, but she acts like a whale, Moby Dick in particular. The Pequod is described as having "thrust her vindictive bows into the

cold malicious waves" (Ch. XXIII, p. 104) and "gored the dark waves in her madness" (Ch. LI, p. 232). And the Pequod is treated like a whale. While chasing whales, the whaleship is in turn chased by pirates, who make prey of the predator whaleship just as she is making prey of the predator whale (Ch. LXXXVII, pp. 380-381). Even Moby Dick treats the Pequod like a whale. Ishmael is very explicit as to the manner in which they fight one another: "It is a little significant, that while one sperm whale only fights another sperm whale with his head and jaw, nevertheless, in his conflicts with man, he chiefly and contemptuously uses his tail" (Ch. LXXXVI, p. 374). It is more than a little significant, then, that Moby Dick does the Pequod "the honor," in Brodtkorb's words (Brodtkorb, p. 69), of ramming her with his head, thereby sinking her.

The link between the whaleship and the whale is strengthened by analogies comparing the whale in turn to the ship. Ishmael notes the striking similarity of their basic designs: "To me this vast ivory-ribbed chest, with the long, unrelieved spine, extending far away from it in a straight line, not a little resembled the hull of a great ship new-laid upon the stocks, when only some twenty of her naked bow-ribs are inserted, and the keel is otherwise, for the time, but a long, disconnected timber" (Ch. CIII, p. 450). The whale's great intestines are compared to the "great cables and hausers coiled away in the subterranean orlop-deck of a line-of-battle-ship" (Ch. CIV, p. 452). Although Ishmael makes no note of the fact that the term "gam" applies both to the collective of whale and to a collection of whaleships, he

does refer to an unusually large collection of whale gams as "The Grand Armada" (Chapter LXXXVII). And Ishmael describes a group of whales gallied or paralyzed by fright as floating helplessly "like water-logged dismantled ships on the sea" (Ch. LXXXVII, p. 382), while Ahab describes Moby Dick as fan-tailing "like a split jib in a squall" (Ch. XXXVI, p. 160).

Ahab like the whale is often referred to in terms of his ship. Stubb sums up his captain in salty language which likens him to a ship, "Aye, take him fore and aft, he's about the queerest old man Stubb ever sailed with" (Ch. XXIX, p. 125). In contrasting Ahab with the Parsee, Ishmael refers to Ahab as "all rib and keel" (Ch. CXXX, p. 529). The old Gay-Head Indian divulges a bit of scuttlebut, "Aye, he was dismasted off Japan...but like his dismasted craft, he shipped another mast without coming home for it" (Ch. XXVIII, p. 121). Although the simile sounds a trifle literary for an old Indian, and the follow-up, "He has a quiver of 'em" (Ch. XXVIII, p. 121), serves more to accentuate the incongruity than to mask it, Melville has laid the groundwork for this comparison carefully. In Ishmael's initial description of the Pequod, he confides that, "Her masts [were] cut somewhere on the coast of Japan, where her original ones were lost overboard in a gale" (Ch. XVI, p. 68). In repairing and replacing Ahab's ivory leg, the ship's carpenter works on Ahab just as he would on the ship (Ch. CVI, pp. 461-462 / Ch. CXXXIV, p. 554). Completing the explicit analogy between Ahab and his ship is the implicit analogy that by virtue of his jaw-bone leg, Ahab like the

Pequod wears the chastened bones of his enemy. Ironically, Ahab inadvertently refers to himself as a cannibal (Ch. CXXXII, p. 535).

It is Ahab's tragedy that though he recognizes the existence of the linked analogies which liken Ahab himself with the Pequod, and the Pequod with Moby Dick, Ahab can not or will not accept their implication, that Ahab is linked to Moby Dick through the Pequod. The analogies which link the soul of man with Nature, and which should foster sympathy rather than hostility are unacceptable to Ahab because they are fraught with ambiguity. And as Chase points out, although Ishmael can accept ambiguity, Ahab can not. He is too rigid an allegorist.[15] The white whale represents evil to Ahab, and therefore can evoke only hostility. This is the "hideous and intolerable allegory" which Ishmael detests. Through the vehicle of the ship, Ishmael attempts to fathom Ahab's allegorizing mind, while Ahab consiously and subconsciously attempts to reveal this mind through the ship.

Ahab himself reveals his alienation from both man and nature through self-analogy with his ship, "I leave a white and turbid wake; pale waters, paler cheeks, where'er I sail. The envious billows sidelong swell to whelm my track; let them; but first I pass" (Ch. XXXVII, p. 165). Ahab also reveals the compulsive force which drives him in terms of his ship: "What is it, what nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing is it; what cozzening, hidden lord and master, and cruel, remorseless emperor commands me; that against all natural lovings and longings, I so keep pushing, and crowding, and jamming myself on all the time"

(Ch. CXXXII, p. 536). In like terms, Ahab exhibits the adamant pride which prevents him from changing his course; "Loftiest trucks were made for wildest winds, and this brain-truck of mine now sails amid the cloud-scud. Shall I strike that? Oh, none but cowards send down their brain-trucks in tempest time" (Ch. CXX, p. 502). And Ahab predicts his destiny literally and figuratively by comparing his soul with his ship: "For the third time my soul's ship starts upon this voyage!....Some ships sail from their ports, and ever afterwards are missing" (Ch. CXXXV, p. 558).

Ishmael as well as Starbuck also view the ship as an extension of Ahab's psyche. Ishmael in describing the Pequod is struck by the similarity between the ship and her captain: "The burning ship drove on, as if remorselessly commissioned to some vengeful deed" (Ch. XCVI, p. 420), and "the ship groaned and dived, and yet steadfastly shot her red hell further into the blackness of the sea and the night, and scornfully champed the white bone in her mouth, and viciously spat round her on all sides; then the rushing Pequod, freighted with savages, and laden with fire, and burning a corpse, and plunging into that blackness of darkness, seemed the material counterpart of her monomaniac commander's soul" (Ch. XCVI, p. 421). Starbuck utilizes the stern of the ship to reveal Ahab's psyche as he allegorizes the Pequod, "Methinks it pictures life. Foremost through the sparkling sea shoots on the gay, embattled, bantering bow, but only to drag dark Ahab after it, where he broods within his sternward cabin, builded over the dead water of the wake, and further on,

hunted by its wolfish gurglings" (Ch. XXXVIII, p. 167).

The attempts of Ishmael and the rest of the crew to analyze and explain Ahab through the vehicle of his ship constitute at least an unconscious acknowledgment on their part that the Pequod is Ahab's alter ego. Ahab himself acknowledges this alter ego through his frequent self-analogies with the Pequod and his deep anxiety that he and his ship must perish separately. An examination of the Pequod as Ahab's alter ego through the methods and terminology of modern depth psychology may elucidate Ahab's psyche.

In attempting to fathom Ahab's psychological motivation, Ishmael observes, "Ahab's larger, darker, deeper part remains unhinted" (Ch. XLI, p. 183). Percival may be referring to this observation among others when he suggests that lacking in the terminology of depth psychology, Ishmael attempts to suggest the ominous and mysterious in Ahab's temperament through metaphor of the deep and dark recesses of the earth (Percival, p. 14). Like White Jacket, Ishmael is fascinated by the subterranean, and also like White Jacket, Ishmael associates the subterranean with the bowels or hold of an ancient ship. Ahab's psychological motivation lies hidden within his "larger, darker, deeper part" which he significantly terms "the deep-loaded hull" (Ch. CIX, p. 470).

Melville utilizes the hold as a heart of darkness, in much the same manner in which Conrad utilizes the jungle in Heart of Darkness. Both jungle and hold are black, primeval nightmares which gain control of the protagonists, and both are in psychical reality merely projections

of their own minds. However, unlike Kurtz, Ahab refuses to recognize his surrender to the heart of darkness. Thus, while Kurtz triumphs in his final recognition that the heart of darkness lies within himself, Ahab's tragedy lies in his continued failure to recognize that the "blackness of darkness" into which his soul plunges lies within the "larger, darker, deeper part" of his own "deep-loaded hull."

An examination of the Pequod's deep-loaded hull in the light of Freud's theory of the id casts an uncanny illumination into the "darker, deeper part" of Ahab's psyche and upon its ominous and mysterious contents. Freud's introductory definition of the id states, "It is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality; what little we know of it we have learnt from our study of the dream-work."[16] The futile search for the leak in the submerged hold of the Town-Ho and the seemingly futile search for the leaking casks in the "black midnight" of the Pequod's hold physically illustrate the darkness and inaccessibility of the id. And Bezanson notes the nightmare quality of the five dusky phantoms in the hold.[17] Fedallah, who is so closely associated with the hold, is described as "such a creature as civilized, domestic people in the temperate zone only see in their dreams, and that but dimly" (Ch. L, p. 230).

According to Freud, "The logical laws of thought do not apply in the id....There is no recognition of the passage of time....The id of course knows no judgements of value: no good and evil, no morality.... Instinctual cathexes seeking discharge--that, in our view, is all there

is in the id" (Freud, pp. 73-74). Fedallah is the quasi-physical embodiment of this state. Although he is decidedly not a moral being, he is almost as certainly not immoral. Rather, he appears amoral, existing beyond the pale of good and evil. His being and behavior appear motivated by primitive instinct bordering upon the supernatural rather than by the rational and natural. And emanating from the ante-diluvian hold,[18] Fedallah creates an impression of satanic and oriental timelessness and changelessness.

Feidelson concisely states, "Fedallah is like a creature of the dream world; but the dream world is like the Asiatic world, which has little of the Western interest in historical change and therefore preserves the most primitive human consciousness; the primitive human consciousness is on the borderline of the natural and the supernatural; and the supernatural is on the borderline of good and evil" (Feidelson, p. 308, n. 10). In other words, Fedallah's world is the world of primitive consciousness which is the world of civilized unconsciousness, or the id, which we learn of primarily through our dreams. And Fedallah's domain is the hold of the Pequod.

The death and other aggressive instincts originate in the id just as Fedallah and the rest of the phantom crew emanate from the hold. The influence of the hold and Fedallah upon Ahab are evident long before Fedallah appears upon deck. In Percival's words, "When...Ahab, on deck, imposed the oath of vengeance upon his crew, there came 'the low laugh from the hold,' a mocking, malevolent, Mephistophelean laugh--the signal of the Parsee's triumph. When a protest came from Starbuck, 'the subter-

ranean laugh died away,' but the protest was short-lived, and Ahab embraced his fate. Thus triumphant, the Parsee can appear on deck" (Percival, p. 44).

Fedallah gains control of the deck through his control of Ahab for "even as Ahab's eyes so awed the crew's, the inscrutable Parsee's glance awed his; or somehow, at least, in some wild way, at times affected it" (Ch. CXXX, p. 527). Percival hypothesizes that "the subtly maddened half of Ahab's mind is represented by the Parsee" (Percival, p. 41), and that Ahab is seduced by this deceitful spirit-portion of his own mind. Like his namesake King Ahab, Ahab is deceived by a lying spirit which leads him to his death (Percival, p. 53), but unlike King Ahab, this destructive spirit emanates from within. Fedallah is Ahab's death instinct with whom he exchanges unflinching gazes "as if in the Parsee Ahab saw his forethrown shadow, in Ahab the Parsee his abandoned substance" (Ch. CXXX, p. 528). In guiding Ahab to his death, Fedallah precedes him.

Ahab's id is also the seat of the aggression he exhibits toward Moby Dick. According to Calvin S. Hall, the id can only dispose of its aggressive energy through impulsive motor activity or reflex action and wish-fulfillment or dreams, fantasy, and hallucination.[14] Ahab exhibits reflex action when he flails at Moby Dick, "blindly seeking with a six inch blade to reach the fathom-deep life of the whale" (Ch. XLI, p. 181), giving loose to what Ishmael terms "a sudden, passionate, corporal animosity" (Ch. XLI, p. 182). The delirium which renders Ahab "a raving lunatic" (Ch. XLI, p. 182) may represent the id's futile attempt to revenge itself through wish-fulfillment upon Moby Dick, who becomes by

the predicate thinking of the id (Hall, p. 35) a scapegoat for all its aggression, no matter what the source (Ch. XLI, p. 181).

The death and aggressive instincts reside in the id, but they can come to expression only through the guiding process of the ego or the superego (Hall, p. 58). If the hold represents Ahab's hidden deeper, darker part, his irrational instinctual energies or id, then the deck represents Ahab's seemingly apparent being, his rational cognitive powers or ego. This ego, according to Freud, "must on the whole carry out the id's intentions, it fulfills its task by finding out the circumstances in which those intentions can best be achieved" (Freud, p. 77). Ahab's ego on deck struggles to appease his relentless id in the hold: "Soon his steady, ivory stride was heard, as to and fro he paced his old rounds, upon planks so familiar to his tread, that they were all over dented, like geological stones, with the peculiar mark of his walk. Did you fixedly gaze, too, upon that ribbed and dented brow; there also, you would see still stranger foot-prints--the foot-prints of his one unsleeping, ever-pacing thought" (Ch. XXXVI, pp. 157-158).

Although Ahab's ego attempts to carry out the id's intention, the ego at one and the same time also attempts to defend itself against the id by its defense mechanisms. Hall explains, "The defense mechanisms try to avert the danger [from the instincts] by altering instinctual object-choices. The death instinct, for example, is projected outward by the ego in the form of destruction, aggression, mastery, dominance,

exploitation, and competition. This means that external objects are substituted for the original object-choice which is the person himself. As long as the energy of the death instincts can be deflected away from one's own person, danger is averted and the person does not feel anxious" (Hall, pp. 104-105). So Ahab's ego protects itself by projecting the death instinct of the id outward into aggression toward Moby Dick.

Then Ahab's ego projects this same aggression toward Moby Dick into aggression by Moby Dick. Hall further explains, "Projection does more than alleviate anxiety. It also offers a person an excuse for expressing his real feelings. A person who believes that he is hated or persecuted may use this belief as a justification for attacking his imaginary enemy. By using the pretext of defending himself against his enemies he is able to gain satisfaction for his hostile impulses. He obtains pleasure without feeling guilty because he feels that his aggression is justified (Hall, p. 92).

Ahab has perverted whaling, whose only justification for existence is economic, into a personal vendetta. However, Ahab can only hide revenge behind the profit motive for the owners; he can not hide revenge from the crew who will recognize Moby Dick as a poor economic venture, indeed, what with the inevitable loss of time, equipment, boats, and men. Even supposing Ahab could convince his crew that Moby Dick could be killed and tryed out, all his experienced whalemen would know that whales with deformed jaws were notoriously short on oil. So Ahab

arouses the lust for the kill among his primitive crew by appealing to the same aggressive instincts within them which motivate his own lust to kill Moby Dick.

Ahab can not or will not admit that he is possessed of the same primitive instincts which motivate his crew, so his ego employs reaction formation, which Hall epitomizes as expenditure of energy for "deceptive and hypocritical purposes," to deceive himself, thereby masquerading the primitive aggression of revenge as civilized duty, moral responsibility, and religious quest. Ahab's reation formation accounts not only for his distortion of reality but also for the rigidity and inflexibility of his personality and for his exaggerated sense of duty. Hall's description of reactive love could well be applied to Ahab's duty in that it "protests too much; it is overdone, extravagant, showy, and affected. It is counterfeit, and its falseness, like the player-queen in Hamlet, is usually easily detected" (Hall, pp. 95-96). Ishmael does, in fact, detect Ahab's dissembling, for he observes of Ahab that "behind those forms and usages, as it were, he sometimes masked himself; incidentally making use of them for other and more private ends than they were legitimately intended to subserve" (Ch. XXXIII, p. 144). And Ishmael surmises that Ahab also is aware of his own dissembling: "Now, in his heart, Ahab had some glimpse of this, namely: all my means are sane, my motive and my object mad. Yet without power to kill, or change, or shun the fact; he likewise knew that to mankind he did long dissemble; in some sort, did still. But that thing

of his dissembling was only subject to his perceptibility, not to his will determinate" (Ch. XLI, p. 183).

Ahab also reveals his reaction formation through its compulsion. Hall continues, "Another feature of a reaction formation is compulsiveness. A person who is defending himself against anxiety by means of a reaction formation can not deviate from expressing the opposite of what he really feels" (Hall, p. 95). Ahab's reaction formation forces him to become the rigid allegorist so alien to Ishmael. Moby Dick must allegorize evil and only evil at all times to sustain Ahab's reaction formation. If Ahab's ego would admit of Ishmael's ambivalent symbolism, its reaction formation would crumble, exposing the primitive aggression of the id.

Although Ahab's ego fails to oppose his id, however, under certain circumstances his superego does attempt to resist the id. If the hold represents Ahab's instinctual energies or id, and the deck represents his rational powers or ego, then the cabin represents his conscience and soul or superego. According to Freud, the main functions of the superego are self-observation, judgment, and punishment. "The super-ego applies the strictest moral standard to the helpless ego which is at its mercy; in general it represents the claims of morality, and we realize at once that our moral sense of guilt is the expression of the tension between the ego and the super-ego." The superego is merely the internalization of the parents' authority over the child, and the superego observes, judges, and punishes the ego just as the parents did the child (Freud, pp. 60-62).

However, in Ahab's case his superego has been corrupted by the id through the ego. Hall explains, "The superego of a very high-minded person can also gain satisfaction for the id by attacking people [or presumably sperm whales] who are considered to be immoral. Cruelty masquerading as moral indignation is not unknown and has even been practiced on a large scale....Ostensibly, these sadistic attacks were instigated by moral fervor of the highest order. Actually, however, they represent the expression of primitive id forces. In such cases, the superego is said to be corrupted by the id" (Hall, p. 45).

The superego recognizes its corruption within the cabin because during sleep the ego fails to function effectively, its defense mechanisms weaken, and the primitive id forces are revealed. In Hall's words, "Because the ego cannot function efficiently during sleep, the primary process is invoked and produces hallucinatory images" as "ego-cathexes are reconverted into instinctual object-cathexes" (Hall, p. 40). Ishmael describes such an occasion "when, as was sometimes the case, these spiritual throes in him heaved his being up from its base, and a chasm seemed opening in him...and accursed fiends beckoned him to leap down among them; when this hell in himself yawned beneath him, a wild cry would be heard through the ship; and with glaring eyes Ahab would burst from his state room" (Ch. XLIV, p. 199).

Ahab and the Pequod illustrate Freud's thesis that, "Human beings fall ill of a conflict between the claims of instinctual life and the resistance which arises within them against it" (Freud, p. 57).

The fiends in hell represent Fedallah and the phantom crew in the hold or Ahab's primitive instincts within his id--Ishmael pointedly qualifies "hell" with "in himself." The resistance arising within the cabin represents Ahab's superego struggling against the id or rather the hallucinations produced by the id; Ishmael goes on to describe the superego as "the eternal, living principle or soul in him; and in sleep, being for the time dissociated from the characterizing mind, which at other times employed it for its outer vehicle or agent, it spontaneously sought escape from the scorching contiguity of the frantic thing, of which, for the time, it was no longer an integral" (Ch. XLIV, p. 200).

Ahab's "living principle" or superego can resist its "scorching contiguity" or id only when freed from his "characterizing mind" or ego by sleep. And then this resistance by the superego to the id amounts to little more than frantic flight almost immediately arrested by the ego which regains its effectiveness as Ahab regains consciousness. Ahab's ego is too weak to perform adequately its functions of observation, judgment, and punishment. Freud theorizes that "the super-ego is stunted in its strength and growth if the surmounting of the Oedipus complex is only incompletely successful" (Freud, p. 64).

The unresolved Oedipus complex can create conflict within the unconscious between the instincts and reality, resulting in neurosis or schizophrenia. The neurotic functions within conscious reality. However, he substitutes socially acceptable manifestations of the

unconscious conflict as obsessive-compulsive activity. The schizophrenic, on the other hand, retreats from reality. He asserts that his is not the offspring of his parent, but his own father and thus the mate of his mother. Ahab is a borderline case.

Whaling has been an obsessive-compulsive activity of Ahab's for forty years. He himself describes his obsession as "forty years of continual whaling! forty years of privation, and peril, and storm-time! forty years on the pitiless sea! for forty years has Ahab forsaken the peaceful land, for forty years to make war on the horrors of the deep!" (Ch. CXXXII, p. 534). And he also describes the compusion as "the madness, the frenzy, the boiling blood and the smoking brow, with which, for a thousand lowerings old Ahab has furiously, foamingly chased his prey--more a demon than a man!--aye, aye! what a forty years' fool—. fool--old fool, has old Ahab been! (Ch. CXXXII, p. 534). But although Ahab recognizes whaling as an obsessive-compulsive activity, he does not recognize the cause: "Why this strife of the chase? why weary, and palsy the arm at the oar, and the iron, and the lance? how the richer or better is Ahab now? Behold" (Ch. CXXXII, pp. 534-535).

The hunt for Moby Dick is, however, the culmination of this forty-year obsessive-compulsive whale hunt. Ahab's physical mannerisms in relation to the Pequod also reveal its gathering intensity. He compulsively walks the deck, tracing and retracing the same steps between the undeviating limits of the mainmast and the binnacle (Ch. XXXVI, p. 158 / Ch. XCIX, pp. 426-427).[20] The same obsessive "unsleeping, ever-pacing thought" (Ch. XXXVI, p. 158) which compels Ahab to pace the deck, also

compels him to grasp the mizen shrouds "almost convulsively" (Ch. XXXVI, p. 159) in what also progressively becomes a symbolic gesture of Ahab's neurotic state of mind.

Ahab reveals his incipient schizophrenia through his relationship with the Pequod, particularly her masts and hold. In retreating from reality, the masts become a father figure to Ahab with the implication of the hold suggesting a mother image. The masts lend themselves readily to this role in that they appear as natural phallic symbols. That the masts of the Pequod be considered phallic symbols seems absurd upon superficial consideration. However, upon considering the frequency with which flagrant phallic symbols do occur within Moby-Dick,[21] the phallic value of the masts seems more reasonable than absurd. And upon considering Ahab's explicit reference to the mainmast as his "fiery father," the phallic value of the masts seems both reasonable and probable. Although Ahab never denies his "fiery father," he defies and challenges him (Ch. CXIX, p. 501), and derogates him in favor of his "sweet mother": "But thou art but my fiery father; my sweet mother, I know not" (Ch. CXIX, p. 500).

If the erect and fiery masts are phallus-like, the dark and enveloping hold from which they spring is womb-like. Stubb acknowledges this creative power in his dialogue with Starbuck just as will Ahab in his soliloquy before the mainmast. Stubb attempts to persuade Starbuck that the corposants illuminate the masts because "those masts are rooted in a hold that is going to be chock a' block with sperm-oil,

d'ye see; and so, all that sperm will work up into the masts, like sap in a tree. Yes, our three masts will yet be as three spermaceti candles" (Ch. CXIX, p. 499). Ahab's soliloquy before the mast reiterates Stubb's naive superstitious theory in the form of his own sophisticated metaphysical concepts: "Light though thou be, thou leapest out of darkness" (Ch. CXIX, p. 500). Ahab now associates the darkness of the hold with love, creativity, and the womb or sweet mother, just as he now associates the light of the masts with hate, destruction, and the phallus or fiery father.

Ahab's rebellion against his "fiery father" coupled with his yearning for his "sweet mother" would clearly seem to indicate an Oedipus complex. However, in Ahab the squalid infighting of the Oedipus of psychology has been elevated to the cosmic struggle of the Oedipus of Greek tragedy. Both defy fate and are smitten for their hubris in so doing. However, Oedipus sought only to elude fate, while Ahab wills himself master of fate or agent of fate in order to avoid responsibility and yet retain the power and prestige of omnipotence. In reality, Ahab, like Oedipus, becomes the victim of fate rather than the master or even the agent of fate. However, Oedipus is fated to commit the physical patricide which he struggles to avoid, while Ahab is fated to avoid the symbolic patricide which he struggles to commit.

Ahad's rebellion against his "fiery father" also closely resembles the Prometheus myth. Feidelson suggests the parallel between the Greek demigod who defied the gods by stealing their fire and Ahab who also chooses to fight fire with fire (Feidelson, p. 642, n. 19).

Philosophically, Ahab appears to have less in common with Aeschylus' Prometheus than with Shelley's, in that the dramatic Prometheus revolted against divine authority rather than against an abstraction of oppressive authority in general as did the poetic Prometheus.

Ahab's rebellion against the masts represents his rebellion against "haughty Admirals, and Commodores, and Captains" (Ch. CXVIII, p. 494), authority figures who according to Freud supersede the father in later life (Freud, p. 64). Ahab, like Shelley's Prometheus, appears to be a noble nature defying authoritarian oppression, thereby suffering for mankind. In reality, however, Ahab is one of the haughty captains whom he claims to defy, exercising the authoritarian oppression over mankind which he claims to resist. And while Shelley's Prometheus is perfected through his suffering until he pities Jupiter and repents his curse, Ahab is hardened by his suffering until his heart is recalcitrant and incapable of forgiving wrong. Shelley's Prometheus conquers hate and force by opposing them with love and forgiveness. Ahab like Aeschylus' Prometheus fails to conquer hate and force because he generates hate for hate and fights force with force.

Philosophically, then, Ahab has less in common with Shelley's Prometheus than with Aeschylus', in that Ahab only appears to revolt against an abstraction of oppressive authority rather than against divine authority. Percival and Thompson among others have noted Ahab's apparent rebellion against God. Ahab curses the light and all that points toward heaven (Ch. CXVIII, p. 494). Just hours later the corpusants tip the

yardarms with fire, and each of the three masts looks "like three gigantic wax tapers before an altar" (Ch. CXIX, p. 498). In defying the flaming masts, Ahab defies not only earthly authority figures such as father, captain, admiral, and commodores, but also the heavenly authority figure of God the Father.

In so doing, Ahab assumes the figure of Antichrist. The background for his anti-crucifixion has been carefully laid previously. Ahab is initially described as an "ungodly, god-like man" by Peleg (Ch. XVI, p. 79), and then Ahab presides over a black mass to annoint his disciples (Ch. XXXVI, pp. 163-165). And Ahab, who bears a "crucifixion in his face" (Ch. XXVIII, p. 122), "sleeps with clenched hands; and wakes with his own bloody nails in his palms" (Ch. XLIV, p. 199), with a word play on "nails" suggesting crucifixion (Feidelson, p. 271, n. 11). However, as Ahab is psychologically self-crucified, the mainmast stands more as symbol of this crucifixion than as crucifix as it does as Billy Budd is physically hanged. Vincent Freimarck sees the three masts of the Indomitable in Billy Budd as an intimation of Calvary, in that Billy was hanged from the main-yard while such executions were customarily held at the foremast rather than the mainmast.[22] However, if the saintly Billy is a Christ figure sacrificed upon the cruciform mainmast, Ahab is an Antichrist figure rebelling against the cruciform mainmast. And if a symbol grows out of Billy's sacrifice on the mainmast, Ahab's rebellion against the mainmast grows out of the symbol.

If Ahab's rebellion against the mainmast reveals the archetypal rebellion of man against his father, oppressive authority, and God, Ahab's relationship with his ship reveals the consequence of such rebellion. Ahab reveals his longing for discipline and punishment, his pride in evading them, and his defiance at receiving them by metaphor with the Pequod.

Much as the speaker of John Donne's "Holy Sonnet X" likens himself to a faulty piece of ironware and God to a blacksmith, Ahab likens himself to a ship and God to a shipwrecker who in retrospect could only be Moby Dick. The speaker in Donne's sonnet beseeches, "Batter my heart, three person'd God; for, you / As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend; / That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee, 'and bend / Your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new" (ll. 1-4). Ahab pleads, "God! God! God!--crack my heart!--stave my brain!" (Ch. CXXXII, p. 535).

Ahab later amplifies this image, "I feel strained, half stranded, as ropes that tow dismasted frigates in a gale; and I may look so. But ere I break, ye'll hear me crack; and till ye hear that, know that Ahab's hawser tows his purpose yet" (Ch. CXXXIV, p. 554). Ahab's strained and stranded hawser is his physical strength and stamina, and his purpose is like a dismasted frigate, which though powerless itself, still maintains direction by virtue of its keel. When the literal hawser by which Ahab tows himself to Moby Dick snaps, Ahab hears himself crack, presaging his breaking: "What breaks in me? Some sinew

cracks!--'tis whole again (Ch. CXXXV, p. 563). But Ahab is physically broken by the line of the harpoon he darts at Moby Dick. His last words, "Let me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale! Thus, I give up the spear!" (Ch. CXXXV, p. 565), are to become literal as well as figurative truth. However, Ahab's heart has been cracked and the "god-bullied hull" of Ahab's alter ego the Pequod has been staved (Ch. CXXXV, pp. 564-565) as if in answer to Ahab's plea to God to crack his heart and stave his brain or in divine retribution.

Paradoxically, Ahab and his alter ego the Pequod achieve apotheosis in their landless destruction.[23] Ahab apotheosizes the Pequod and indirectly himself in that he conceives of the Pequod as his alter ego: "Oh! ye three unsurrendered spires of mine; thou uncracked keel; and only god-bullied hull; thou firm deck, and haughty helm, and Pole-pointed prow,--death-glorious ship!" (Ch. CXXXV, p. 565). In something akin to pathetic fallacy, Ahab has attributted the indomitableness of his nature to the Pequod's masts, the soundness of his purpose to her keel, the firmness of his resolution to her deck, and the haughtiness of his command to her helm. Feidelson notes that the Pequod is "Pole-poiated" because "figuratively, the Pequod has been like an explorer's ship, bound for one of the Poles, which might stand for ultimate truth or the essence of things" (Feidelson, p. 721, n. 26). So the Pequod is "Pole-pointed" because Ahab himself is a metaphysical explorer and she is "god-bullied" as a consequence.

Thus the Pequod is Ahab's alter ego in death as in life by

linked analogy. Ahab predicted their destiny literally and figuratively by comparing his soul with his ship: "For the third time my soul's ship starts upon this voyage....Some ships sail from their ports, and ever afterwards are missing..." (Ch. CXXXV, p. 558). Ishmael had perceived this in observing that the rushing Pequod, freighted with savages, and laden with fire, and burning a corpse, and plunging into that blackness of darkness, seemed the material counterpart of her monomaniac commander's soul" (Ch. XCVI, p. 421), and "that whatever swift, rushing thing I stood on was not so much bound to any haven ahead as rushing from all havens astern" (Ch. XCVI, p. 421). Ahab's soul is lost at sea just as surely as is his ship.

Ahab's "topmost greatness lies in [his] topmost grief" (Ch. CXXXV, p. 565) in that he and the Pequod must meet their destruction separately. Feidelson notes, "The moment of his death, which he now foresees, will contain everything in his life. It will summarize his essential loneliness on shipboard, since he no longer has even a ship. As the supreme test of his power, it will raise his power to a new height (his 'topmost greatness'), even though he will be destroyed in the test (his 'topmost grief')" (Feidelson, p. 721, n. 27). The "topmost greatness" of both Ahab and the Pequod is that they meet their destruction with defiance rather than submission. Ahab hurls a defiant curse and his harpoon at Moby Dick, and is dragged down to the depths by the whale-line. Tashtego nails a defiant flag and sea hawk to the mast, thereby dragging "a living part of heaven along with her" (Ch. CXXXV, p. 566). Thus Ahab and the Pequod jointly fulfill Ishmael's prophecy to Ahab that

"what shall be grand in thee, it must needs be plucked at from the skies, and dived for in the deep" (Ch. XXXIII, p. 145). It might better be said that Ahab's "topmost greatness" within his "topmost grief" is that Ahab and the Pequod remain unconquered even in destruction. Thus Ahab fulfills Father Mapple's dictum: "Delight is to him whose strong arms yet support him when the ship of this base treacherous world has gone down beneath him" (Ch. IX, p. 48).

Ahab and the "Pole-pointed" Pequod are outward bounders, "in pursuit of those far mysteries we dream of, or in tormented chase of that demon phantom that, some time or other, swims before all human hearts; while chasing such over this round globe, they either lead us on in barren mazes or midway leave us whelmed" (Ch. LII, p. 236). In their inexorable hunt for Moby Dick, Ahab and the Pequod are led in barren mazes and midway left whelmed. They have escaped the futility of circular voyaging through the ambiguity of vertical descent. "But as in landlessness alone resides the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God--so, better is it to perish in that howling infinite, than be ingloriously dashed upon the lee, even if that were safety!" (Ch. XXIII, p. 105).

Melville's use of the ship as symbol was not original, and he unfortunately inherited the heavy-handed management of his didactic predecessors along with their craft. The shakedown cruise White Jacket proved Melville's mastery of the Neversink as either a symbolic vessel or a seaworthy one, but not as both at once, as his allegorical passages tend to overwhelm his craft. However, Melville's use of the

ship as symbol was organic, constantly undergoing change and growth. And the outward-bound cruise Moby-Dick proved Melville's mastery of the Pequod as both symbolic and seaworthy vessel.

FOOTNOTES

[1] E.g., Francis Quarles, "Emblem IX" and "Emblem XI," in Book III of Emblems, Divine and Moral (1635). This work remained popular into the late nineteenth century, according to Tucker Brooke, "Seventeenth-Century Poetry:II. The Moral Tradition," in A Literary History of England, ed. Albert C. Baugh (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948), pp. 641-642.

[2] Herman Melville, White Jacket, introd. William Plomer (London: John Lehmann, 1952), p. xv. All subsequent references to White Jacket are to this edition, unless otherwise noted, and are inserted in the text.

[3] Lawrance Roger Thompson, Melville's Quarrel with God (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), pp. 93-94.

[4] Encyclopedia of Nautical Knowledge, ed. William A. McEwen and Alice H. Lewis (Cambridge, Maryland: Cornell Maritime Press, Inc., 1953), p. 407.

[5] Encyclopedia of Nautical Knowledge, pp. 186-187.

[6] Encyclopedia of Nautical Knowledge, p. 407.

[7] Thompson, p. 94.

[8] Herman Melville, Moby-Dick, ed. Luther S. Mansfield and Howard P. Vincent (New York: Hendricks House, 1952), Ch. XXXIII, p. 143. All subsequent references to Moby-Dick are to this edition, unless otherwise noted, and are inserted in the text.

[9] Charles Feidelson, Jr., ed., Moby-Dick (Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1964), p. 199, n. 10. All subsequent references to Feidelson are to this edition, unless otherwise noted, and are inserted in the text.

[10] Paul Brodtkorb, Jr., Ishmael's White World, Yale Publications in American Studies, No. 9 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 38-39. All subsequent references to Brodtkorb are to this book, unless otherwise noted, and are inserted in the text.

[11] Walter E. Bezanson, "Moby-Dick: Work of Art," in Moby-Dick Centennial Essays, ed. Tyrus Hillway and Luther S. Mansfield (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1953), p. 47.

[12] Henry Nash Smith, "The Image of Society in Moby-Dick," in Moby-Dick Centennial Essays, ed. Tyrus Hillway and Luther S. Mansfield (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1953), p. 60.

[13] Richard Volney Chase, The American Novel and Its Tradition (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1957), p. 81.

[14] Milton Oswin Percival, A Reading of Moby-Dick (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), p. 48. All subsequent references to Percival are to this book, unless otherwise noted, and are inserted in the text.

[15] Chase, p. 81.

[16] Sigmund Freud, "The Dissection of the Psychical Personality," in New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, by Sigmund Freud, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1964), p. 73. All subsequent references to Freud are to this lecture in this translation and edition, unless otherwise noted, and are inserted in the text.

[17] Bezanson, p. 8.

[18] See Ishmael's impression of the hold, Ch. CX, p. 472.

[19] Calvin Springer Hall, A Primer of Freudian Psychology (Cleveland, Ohio: World Publishing Company, 1954), p. 21. All subsequent references to Hall are to this book, unless otherwise noted, and are inserted in the text.

[20] The "undeviating limits" of the mainmast and binnacle deviate just once to the mainmast and mizzenmast (Ch. CXXX, pp. 527-528), but this may be attributed to the same type of oversight which leads Ishmael to confuse the jaw-bone tiller of the Pequod with a conventional ship's wheel (Ch. CXVIII, p. 493).

[21] See Robert Shulman, "The Serious Functions of Melville's Phallic Jokes," AL, XXXIII (May 1961), 179-194.

[22] Vincent Freimarck, "Mainmast as Crucifix in Billy Budd," MLN, LXXII (November 1957), 496-497.

[23] See "The Lee Shore" (Chapter XXIII) and Feidelson, p. 149, n. 7.

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VITA

On June 8, 1943, Dolores Lotz Roth was born in New York City to Doris M. and Louis H. Lotz. After the birth of her sister Sara, the family moved to the countryside of Hunterdon County, New Jersey, when she was five-years old. The author attended public schools there, beginning in a one-room schoolhouse in September of 1949 and graduating from the sprawling Hunterdon Central High School in Flemington, New Jersey, in June of 1961. Three years later, in June of 1964, she graduated with a B.A. in English from Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

The author married Jon Rutledge Roth on March 21, 1964, and after he was employed by the First National Bank of Allentown, where he is now an assistant bank manager, she joined the teaching staff of the Quakertown Community Schools in 1964 and enrolled in the graduate school of Lehigh University in 1965. When the author and her husband moved back to Hunterdon County in 1967, she resigned from Quakertown and accepted a position at North Hunterdon Regional High School in Annandale, New Jersey. During the summer of 1968, the author was employed by her school system to devise an elective English program for sophomores, juniors, and seniors. This program has now been fully implemented, and the author has taught two of its elective courses, science fiction and American folklore, as well as an introductory course in literature for freshmen and a language arts course for emotionally unstable students.

However, on February 21, 1971, the author was granted a leave of absence because her first baby, Jon Rutledge Roth, Jr., was born that day. The author now plans to raise children, German shepherds, and Arabian horses.